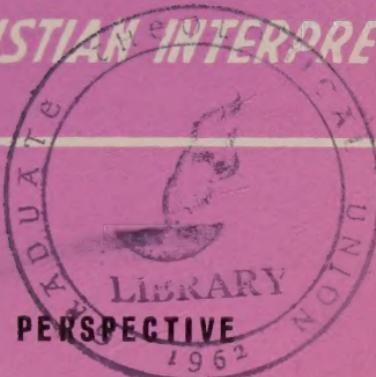


# EEVADHAR

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION



TIME IN THE BIBLE PERSPECTIVE

QOHBLETH'S REFLECTIONS ON TIME

*Jacob Chamakkala*

AUG 23 1977

TIME IN THE PERSPECTIVES OF JEWISH APOCALYPTIC

*K. Luke*

TIME IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

*Mathew Vellanickal*

TIME AND ITS FULNESS IN THE PAULINE CORPUS

*M. Lucas*

TIME IN THE INDO-IRANIAN TRADITION

*K. Luke*

BOOK REVIEW

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CBCI CLERGY COMMISSION

*Jeevadharma* is published in two editions,  
English and Malayalam

**GENERAL EDITOR**

J. C. Manale

**SECTION EDITORS**

The Problem of Man:	John Arakkal 66 Saarbrucken Rheinstrasse 2 West Germany
The Word of God:	K. Luke Calvary College Trichur-680 004
The Living Christ:	Samuel Rayan Vidya Jyoti, 23 Raj Nivas Marg Delhi-110 054
The People of God:	Xavier Koodapuzha St Thomas Seminary, Vadavathoor Kottayam-686 010
The Meeting of Religions:	John B. Chethimattam Dharmaram College Bangalore-560 029
The Fullness of Life:	Felix Podimattam St Joseph Theological College Kottagiri-643 217

**LITERARY EDITOR**

C. A. Sheppard

**SECTIONAL BOARD OF EDITORS**

Mathew Vellanickal	C. M. Cherian
George Mangatt	J. M. Pathrapankal
George Soares-Prabhu	Odilo Maria Lucas
	R. J. Raja

**EDITOR - BOOK REVIEWS**

J. B. Chethimattam

(Contd. on inside back-cover)

# JEEVADHARA

## The Word of God

**TIME IN THE BIBLE PERSPECTIVE**

Editor:

**K. Luke**

Theology Centre  
Alleppey - 688001  
Kerala, India

# THE WORD OF GOD

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	115
Qoheleth's Reflections on Time <i>Jacob Chamakkala</i>	117
Time in the Perspectives of Jewish Apocalyptic <i>K. Luke</i>	132
Time in the Teaching of Jesus <i>Mathew Vellanickal</i>	155
Time and its Fulness in the Pauline Corpus <i>M. Lucas</i>	164
Time in the Indo-Iranian Tradition <i>K. Luke</i>	175
Book Reviews	195
Under the Auspices of the CBCI Clergy Commission	

## Editorial

The part time does play in our experience as men is often so much taken for granted that we do not stop to reflect upon it. However, people who had the sense of observation and, of course, all those who were religious-minded, did dwell upon the genuinely human problem posed by the fact of time. The Judaeo-Christian understanding of time is documented in the Bible as well as in the apocalyptic writings, and the four major contributions to the present issue of *Jeevadhara* endeavour to bring out some of the important aspects of the Judaeo-Christian idea.

The book of Qoheleth embodies a series of reflections on God's lordship over time (3: 1-15): God has fixed a time for everything, but it remains beyond man's grasp, so that for all practical purposes the believer is caught up in a web whence escape is impossible. Time in this case is a noose, and man has to bend his knee in the presence of the one who is the author and master of time. The first article by Jacob Chamakkala tries to elucidate Qoheleth's thought.

The Jewish community began to reflect most seriously on time and its consummation in the early part of the second century B. C. when it was undergoing persecution for its faith, and it was at this juncture that there came into vogue a special group of works, the apocalypses. The *genre* these books employ is known as the apocalyptic, and in a special article the apocalyptic idea of time and its consummation is studied. Since most readers are not familiar with the *genre* in question here, in the first part of the study an endeavour is made to describe it briefly, and in the concluding section its significance for the modern believer is also indicated. It goes without saying that full justice has not been done to the topic.

Jesus began his ministry with the announcement that the *kairos* has been fulfilled and that the kingdom of God has at last dawned upon humanity. In his person and work there is, then, the consummation of time, to which the Scriptures have been

pointing. Mathew Vellanickal exposes for us the meaning of time in Jesus' preaching.

*Plērōma chronou* (the fulness of time) and *plērōma tōn kairōn* (the fulness of the times) are two basic notions in the Pauline *corpus*, yes, notions which continue and develop, within a christological framework, the apocalyptic traditions of Judaism. The meaning of these expressions and their significance for the Christian faith are discussed by M. Lucas in his article. The last contribution deals with the early Indo-Iranian ideas regarding time. We know that among the Aryans there were men who envisaged time as the ultimate principle of everything, and this tradition evolved in Iran into a full-fledged religious system. These are details which unfortunately remain unknown to non-specialists, unlike the views of later thinkers.

For biblical man time is a God-given, inestimable gift, which has to be made use of to the best of one's capacities. Time means for the Judaeo-Christian believer the positive exercise of freedom which will lead him to salvation, and it is therefore something essentially salvation-historical.

Because of lack of space it has not been possible to discuss the idea of time in the traditions of the Sumero-Accadians and the Egyptians. The Sumerians, for example, have left behind in their wisdom literature some pertinent remarks on time; compare, "In a taunt is its taunt; in a curse is its curse. (Such is) the constant renewal of destiny" (cf. E. I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* [repr., New York, 1968] 1. 83, p. 82). What we have here is a clear affirmation of time in its cyclic course.

The section editor wishes to thank, in a very special way, the contributors who, in spite of their heavy work as professors in seminaries, have most generously undertaken the work of writing the required articles. Had it not been for their whole-hearted co-operation, the publication of the present issue would not have been possible.

# Qoheleth's Reflections on Time

The Bible begins and ends with reference to time: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), and "Surely I am coming soon" (Ap. 22: 20).

Though time was a factor of paramount importance for the faith of Israel, the Bible has hardly any speculations to offer on its nature, such as are found in philosophy, at least from the age of Plato and Aristotle onwards. Hence there is no unified concept of time in the Bible and no single term for time. Instead we find various conceptions of time which find expression in such Hebrew words as for 'day', 'hour', 'eternity', 'aeon', 'end', 'moment', 'decisive point of time', 'now', 'today', 'festal time' etc.<sup>1</sup>

However, the one single Israelite author who offers some reflections on time and the bearing it has on the individual's life and activity here on earth is Qoheleth and for this reason his thought deserves to be more carefully analysed.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Cf. J. B. Bauer, *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology* III, p. 911.

2. The various commentaries on the book Qoheleth discuss the text in a more or less detailed fashion; cf. A. Barucq, *Ecclésiaste* (Verbum Salutis, Paris, 1968). D. Buzy, *L'Ecclésiaste* (Pirot-Clamer, La Sainte Bible, Paris, 1946). L. Di Fonzo, *Ecclesiaste* (La Sacra Bibbia, Turin, 1967). K. Galling, "Der Prediger," *Die Fünf Megillot* 'Handbuch zum Alten Testament' 18, 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1969) pp. 73-125 (cf. p. 94). R. Gordis, *Koheleth, the Man and His World* (Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America 19, New York, 1951). H. W. Hertzberg, *Der Prediger* (Kommentar zum Alten Testament 17/4, 2nd ed., Gütersloh, 1962). H. Lamarter, *Das Buch der Weisheit: Prediger und Sprüche* (Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments 16/1, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1959). R. Pautrel, *L'Ecclésiaste* (Bible de Jer., Paris, 1948). J. J. Weber, *Job et l'Ecclésiaste* (Paris, 1947). W. Zimmerli, *Prediger* (Das Alte Testament Deutsch 16, Göttingen, 1959). Cf. too Galling, "Das Rätsel der Zeit im Urteil

Qoheleth's description of time in 3: 1-15 consists of two parts, viz, vv. 1-9 where the sage tells the reader how man's life follows a predetermined pattern because of God's lordship over time, and vv. 10-15 where he draws practical conclusions from what he has stated in the previous section.

The style in the first part is impersonal, objective and matter-of-fact, whereas in the second half it is highly personal for he uses the expressions "I saw" (v. 10) and "I perceived" (vv. 12, 14).

3: 1-15 resumes the theme announced in 1: 2-11 and elaborated in the most remarkable fashion in 1: 12-2: 26, and 3: 1-15 is wholly reminiscent of 1: 3-11. Both the sections, with their observations on what is transpiring in the world independently of man's will show how the individual is conditioned by factors that are beyond his control and how all his efforts are doomed to remain fruitless, futile and absurd (1: 3=3: 9). God, in His infinite wisdom has established a time for everything, and in as much as man remains unaware of it, all his strivings are futile.

Seen from the literary point of view, 3: 1-8 presents a poetical structure, and beginning with an introduction (v, 1), it enumerates fourteen antitheses (vv. 2-8) which have their own divinely-fixed *kairos*, a *kairos* which is beyond man's grasp and comprehension. These are presented in a chiastic arrangement which renders the poem most fascinating.

Vv. 10-15 are artistically rounded off with the help of the technique known as inclusion. For example, the verb 'āśāh', "to do, make", is used of God in v. 11 and is repeated again in v. 14.

'āśāh'	"he has made"
'āśāh hā'ae lōhîm	"God has done" (v. 11)
ya'āsah hā'ae lōhîm	"God does"
ha'ae lōhîm 'āśāh	"God has done" (v. 14)

This arrangement must certainly be deliberate, meant to contribute to the literary excellence of the whole section.

The two technical terms *zemān*, "season", and *'ēt*, used in the opening verse are of great importance in our discussion and deserve a detailed explanation. The former, a loan-word from Aramaic, occurs not only in Hebrew, but also in Syriac (*zēbān*), Arabic, Ethiopic, Mehri (*zemōn*, *zubōn*), Samaritan, etc., though its etymology remains obscure.<sup>3</sup> It has been derived from Accadian *simānu*, "a convenient, fixed date, an appointed time," and the change of initial *s* (unvoiced) to *z* (voiced) has been explained as an instance of regressive assimilation, i. e., as the result of the influence of *m*, the second consonant which is voiced, and as for the reduction of *i* to zero, it is quite in keeping with the principles of Aramaic phonology: the short free vowel before the accented syllable has to be reduced to zero or *sēwa*. A Persian origin of *zemān* has also been sustained by specialists. Albright, for example, who has been oscillating for long between Accadian *simānu* and Iranian *zrvān*, has finally opted for the latter.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, Zoroastrian writings in Bahlavi or Middle Persian employ the word *zamān* (but in the Avesta *zrvan-*), and in their mythology they distinguish between "Unlimited Time" and "Limited Time."<sup>5</sup> Speculations on time visualized as the source of origin of everything go back to the period of Indo-Iranian unity, and it is quite likely that already in the Achaemenid age (550–33 BC) the god Zurvan was thought of as the one who settled the fate of everything and embodied in himself the undifferentiated opposites of light and darkness, good and evil, truth and falsehood, used to be worshipped by the Persians. *Zurvān* is time that is unlimited, but in as much as this species has an abstract character it is also time as such, and the limited variety represents the span within which history runs its course. Qoheleth, endowed as he was with a most inquisitive mind, could without difficulty have become acquainted with Persian ideas, and the appearance of the technical *zamān* in his book is not unusual or out of the way.

3. Cf. G. Gerleman, *Esther* (Biblischer Kommentar AT 21, Neukirchen, 1973) p. 140.

4. Cf. W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (New York, 1969) p. 262, n. 153.

5. For details, cf. G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans* (Die Religionen der Menschheit 14, Stuttgart, 1965).

The favourite word for time in 3: 1-8, however, is *'et* (used 297 times in the Hebrew Bible) which is found in Phoenician as well, and since its plural and suffixal forms appear with a double *t* (compare *'ittim*, "times", *'ittō*, "his time," *'ittām*, "their time," etc.), it follows that the original form was *'itt*, but this noun can be derived from four different bases! In all likelihood the proper base is *yā'ad*, "to determine, fix," a base from which there could normally evolve a nominal form denoting time.

Of the two terms the more important one is *'et*, and the meaning it has in 3: 1-8 is "suitable, proper, appropriate time", and this is a meaning occurring in several contexts: thus Yahweh gives rain *b'ittō*, "in its time" (Jer. 5: 24); the tree planted near the sources of running water yields its fruit *b'ittō* (Ps. 1: 3); compare too the confession of a pious believer that there is for Yahweh *'et la'ašot*, "a time to act" (Ps. 119: 126), for the wicked are oblivious of his law. These texts will certainly help us to understand Qoheleth's reflections. A point of interest is that this term is used 28 times in vv. 2-8, that is, the author has adopted a multiple of the sacred and symbolical number seven in order to make this poem all the more impressive and attractive to the pious reader (cf. too 7: 1 ff. where there is a collection of seven utterances beginning with the words "better than").

Let us now pass on to the exegesis of the text: (3: 1-15).

**V. 1.** Qoheleth, in his search after the meaning of time, perceives that every activity has *'ittō*, "its proper time," that there is an *'et* for the series of activities described in vv. 2-8, but it is determined by God, the supreme lord and master. The sages of old, well aware of the fact that success in life depended not on haphazard doing and that everything came to be at its own proper time, made it a point to inculcate the need of doing things at the proper time. Thus in Proverbs 15: 23 one comes across the spirited exclamation of a wise man: "A word *b'itto* (in season), how good it is!" Some persons were supposed to be endowed with the special charisma of discernment of times; we are told that David had with him two counsellors, Ahithophel whose word used to be regarded as divine revelation (2 Sam. 16: 23), and Husai who proved to be shrewder than Ahithophel and managed to frustrate his designs against David (2 Sam. 17: 14). Wisdom

teachers were never tired of proclaiming aloud that security lay in having at hand time-discerning counsellors (Prv. 11:14. 20:18. 24:6). One finds even among the non-Israelite sages in insistence on the need to act at the appropriate *kairos*; thus Ptah-hotep says to the person invited to a meal by a superior: "... Speak only when he has greeted you. Laugh when he laughs. That will be pleassing in his heart, and what you do will be acceptable."<sup>6</sup>

Twice in v. 1 Qoheleth uses his favourite expression *kōl*, "all, every, omnis, omne," from the root *kālal*, "to be complete, perfect" (cf. Arabic *Kullu*, Accadian *kallatu*, etc), the first time absolutely, in the sense of "everything" and the second time with a noun in the genitive case following, literally "everything of affair". The genitival combination in the second half of v. 1 specifies, by pointing to the catalogue in vv. 2-8, the meaning Qoheleth has in mind when he abruptly begins his reflections with *l'kōl*, "for everything"; the Latin term *omnia* can serve as an appropriate rendering.<sup>7</sup> The word "affair" is rendered by *haepaes* literally "delight, pleasure" (cf. Qoh. 12:1), and thence also "that in which one takes delight, pleasure" (cf. Qoh. 3:17 5:7. 8:6). As a parallel to the idiom here, one may cite Arabic *sā'u* which means both "desire" and "thing" (desired).

"Under heaven:" *tahat hassamayim* (1:3. 9:13 etc.) is a favourite expression or cliche of our author. The phrase *tahat kol-hassamayim*, "under the whole of heaven", occurs a few times in the OT (Gen. 7:19. Dt 2:25. 4:19. Job 28:24. 37:3. 41:3 Dan. 9:12), with the sense, "all over the earth"; there is too the shorter formula *tahat hassamayim* (Ex. 7:14. Dt. 7:24. 9:14 etc.), but Qoheleth does not seem to be dependent upon this tradition even though he sporadically uses the latter phrase (1:13. 2:3 si vera lectio).

The statement "there is nothing new under the sun" (1:9) occurs in an inscription of the Elamite ruler Untas-Nap (i) *risa*,

6. Cf. A. Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians. A Sourcebook of their Writings* (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1966) p. 57.

7. F. Zorell, *Lexicon hebraicum et aramaicum Veteris Testamenti* (Rome, 1954) p. 356 a.

a contemporary of the Assyrian emperor Salmanassar I (1274-45) and a builder of a great temple-tower. The sun-god of Elam, who bore the name Nahhunte (from Nan-hunde, perhaps, "day-maker")<sup>8</sup> and who used to be mentioned along with Napir, "moon," was the one who watched over law and its maintenance on the face of this earth. However it would be highly imaginative to argue that Qoheleth was acquainted with the tradition of Elam, and if at all we have made reference to the Elamite text, it is because some scholars have appealed to it in order to clarify a remarkable idiom of our author. His pet phrase would seem rather to have been inspired by Phoenician tradition which attests the combination "under the sun" in the inscriptions of Tabnith (around the end of the sixth century) and his son Esmunazar (around the beginning of the fifth century).<sup>9</sup> Among the Phoenicians the phrase originally meant "under the eyes of the god Samas" who is the judge of all and observes everything done on the face of this earth with a view to rewarding or punishing the persons concerned, but Qoheleth has doubtless demythologized the sense and means only "on this earth."

V. 2. Even at the very first antithesis, the author grips the problem of time at depth. To be born and to die - these are typically the two *kairos* that make all human plans futile, for no man can fix these moments for himself. In front of the inevitability of these two events man has ever stood helpless, as these are beyond his calculations and make their appearance on the scene of history at the time fixed by God.

The idea of planting and uprooting represents another grouping of antonyms well known in ancient Israel and derived ultimately from the farmer's wisdom (cf. Jer. 1:10); but these

8. Cf. J. Friedrich, "Altpersisches und Elamitisches," *Orientalia* 18 (1949) pp. 1-29 (cf. pp. 28 f.). I. Lévy, "Rien de nouveau sous le soleil", *La Nouvelle Clio* 5 (1953) pp. 326-28. The following saying is attributed to Pythagoras: "The things that happen once, happen again and nothing is absolutely new" (cited by R. Y. B. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* (The Anchor Bible, New York, 1965) p. 211).

9. Cf. *ANET*, p. p. 505.

activities are dependent upon the fluctuations of the weather which man neither foresees nor controls, and they therefore take place at the time fixed by God (compare Is. 28 : 23-29).

The chiastic arrangement of items (or alternate parallelism) in this verse enhances the beauty and gravity of the statement:

"to be born" (2a) : "to plant" (2c)  
"to die" (2b) : "to root up" (2d)

The enumeration here begins with a good event but closes with the mention of a sombre one - one that involves death itself.

V. 3. The antithesis in this verse commences with something unpleasant, thus continuing the sombre note sounded at the end of the previous verse:

"to kill" (3a) : "to tear down" (3c)  
"to heal" (3b) : "to build" (3d)

The verse ends with the mention of something pleasant; the assonance between *lirpō*, "to heal", and *lirpōs*, "to tear down" deserves special attention.

V. 4. As in v. 3 Qoheleth now rounds off his remarks with the mention of something pleasant. The verbal root underlying "to mourn," *sāpad*, is a technical term denoting lamentation at the time of death (Qoh. 12 : 5), and "to weep," *bākāh*, too occurs in contexts dealing with death and its aftermath (cf. de Vaux.).

V. 5. Henceforth the structure of the individual verses, will not be indicated as it will be clear from what has so far been discussed.

Several explanations have been put forward as to the meaning of 'casting away stones' and 'gathering stones'. It is easily thought of as cessation from work when one is despondent and desperate and the resumption of the same task when the gloomy mood has changed or when success is certain. One may also argue that the writer is thinking of children at play embracing each other and running away or scattering and again collecting

stones; or perhaps the writer has in mind the custom in time of war of throwing stones into fertile fields and rendering them useless (2 Kg. 3: 19, 25) and of repairing the fields when peace has dawned upon the land. The difficulty with regard to these explanations is that they fail to take into account the most obvious sense of the second half of the present verse.

A quite ingenious theory proposed recently must be mentioned here. From the site of Nuzi there has been unearthed a clay bag or purse containing forty-eight stones, with the inscription, "Stones (recording the count of) sheep and goats: twenty-one ewes, six she-lambs. . ."; there is too the superscription mentioning Ziqqaru the shepherd as the owner of the bag. With an appeal to the Nuzi evidence Otto Eissfeldt has explained the phrase "bundle of the living" in 1 Sam. 25: 29 as a bag or kerchief for tying up valuables, and Qoheleth, as he refers to the gathering and scattering of stones, perhaps has in mind the custom attested to at Nuzi<sup>10</sup> This is also Galli<sup>11</sup>'s position in his study of 3: 1- 15,<sup>12</sup> but there are two critical remarks to be made: first it is not clear that the Nuzi usage was prevalent in Palestine in the age of the Preacher; secondly, the new interpretation has no bearing upon the thought of the second half of the verse.

Jewish tradition has it that Qoheleth is here speaking of man's sexual life which also depends upon the fluctuations of time, despite the fact that it is something most private, personal and intimate. The meanings of 'embrace' and 'abstention from it' are beyond doubt in a sexual context, and the first half of the verse has been explained as follows by the rabbis: "A time to cast stones-when your wife is clean (menstrually), and a time to gather stones - when your wife is unclean."<sup>12</sup> In this exegesis the verse

10. Cf. O. Eissfeldt, *Der Beutel des Lebendigen. Alttestamentliche Erzählungs- und Dichtungsmotive im Lichte neuer Nuzi-Texte* (Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse 105/6, Berlin, 1960).

11. Cf. "Das Ratsel..." (n. 2).

12. Gordis, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

becomes a closely-knit unit, and its chiastic structure is fully safeguarded.

V. 6. Here "to lose" means "to consider lost, give up for lost", and as antonym of the parallel verb "to seek," it points to the seeker's coming to the conclusion that what he has been looking for is irretrievably lost and his consequent giving up of the quest. In the original, *l<sup>eh</sup>aslik*, "to cast away" is the same as that of the infinitive underlying "to scatter" (v. 5), and the difference is that in the present verse the verb is used impersonally, without any object.

V. 7. Jewish rites of mourning present the background to the thought in this verse: garments are rent at the time of sorrow (Gen. 37: 29. Sam. 13: 31), but after the period of ritual sorrow the same garments are sewn up. The mourners were also in the habit of keeping silence for a time (Lev. 10: 3. Job. 2: 13. Ez. 3: 26f. 24: 27. 33: 22), after which they could of course speak (Ps. 126: 2). The verse graphically describes man's limitation even in the realm of his verbal expression.

An excellent parallel to the second half of v. 7 is furnished by the Odyssey 11: 379, viz: *hōrē men poleōn muthōn, hōrē de kai hupnou*: "there is a time for story telling; there is also a time for sleep." The tradition regarding the silent man in Egypt too seems to point in this direction.

V. 8. In this final antithesis, Qoheleth turns his attention to the scene of history: he sees men loving and hating each other, waging war and concluding treaties of peace. Another explanation that has been put forward is that the sage here is describing man's world within and without: in the inner world there arise feelings of love and hatred, of which man is by no means the master, and in the world without or in the sphere of history, there is the alternation of times of war and peace. However such an explanation would be too abstract to suit Qoheleth's frame of mind. What he intends to say is that the experience of love and hatred, of war and peace, is the work of God, over which man has no control.

V. 9. After his enumeration of fixed times, Qoheleth now turns to practical considerations: of what advantage is all the toil and hardship that a man endures - a question that very often comes up in the life of every human being. It is not so much the transitoriness and futility of human toil, (2: 15 ff), nor the fluctuations and undependability of whatever is here on earth (1: 3ff) that brought Qoheleth to this observation, but it is the consideration that everything is fixed by God and man has no say in the matter.

His practical conclusion is formulated as a rhetorical query, the answer to which is an emphatic "no". The word "Advantage" is rendered by *yitron*, a noun form occurring only in Qoheleth's book (10 times) and it is derived from the root *yātar* (107 times), "to remain over." In the Hebrew language formations in -on are descriptive in nature, and the term seems to have been borrowed from the world of business and commerce where it meant "profit, gain". The sense the Preacher intends is, "What remains over from all the toil of man?" The conclusion enunciated here has two sides: on the one hand, God has fixed the time of birth, death, etc., and all happenings, including calamities, have their origin from him (cf. v. 11a); on the other man cannot alter God's plan. The remarkable thing about vv. 1-9 is that there is no explicit reference to God. His presence is imperceptibly felt everywhere in the host of details they embody; in vv. 10-15, however, God is explicitly mentioned.

V. 10. From the impersonal considerations in vv. 1-9, Qoheleth now passes on to his own observations. "I have considered," *ra'iti* is a favourite expression of Qoheleth which literally means "I have seen," and the type of seeing in question here is experiential; compare, "But evil we have seen" (Jer. 44:17); "Make us glad... for the years when we saw evil" (Ps. 90:15); "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (Is 52:10).

"The task... to be busied about:" the noun form found here, '*inyān*, which too is a descriptive formation, and the verbal complex *la' <sup>a</sup>not* (infinitive construct of the simple stem with the preposition *l'* -, occurring once more in 1: 13) are both derived

from the same root, namely, *anāh*, “to [be] occupied, busy,” in the pejorative sense. The verb as well as the noun are found exclusively in Qoheleth. The condition or state of life defined as ‘*inyān*, is something unpleasant, and hence the phrase “an evil (worthless) task” (1:13. 4:8). Compare too the statement, “Sorrow and grief are his *inyān*, occupation” (2:23). The most disheartening thing is that this predicament of man comes from God, it is God-given; such is the sense of the verb *nātan*, ‘has appointed’ (lit. ‘has given’), the verb here being part of Q’s special vocabulary (1:13. 2:26. 3:10f. 5:17f. 8:15. 9:9).

V. 11. Qoheleth’s thought in the first half of the verse is dependent upon the Priestly Account of creation (Gen. 1:1-2:4a), though he has modified and adapted the text to the special end he had in view. He begins his dictum with his favourite word *kōl*: “omne fecit pulchrum in tempore suo” (vulgate). “Everything:” *hakkōl*, i. e., the definite article plus *kōl*, which, in the present verse, is taken over from Gen. 1:31 and refers to the world of creation in its totality. The verb *āsāh* ‘He made’ is an explicit citation from the statement, “And God saw all that he *āsāh* had made” (Gen. 1:31; cf. vv. 7. 16. 25). The adjective *yāpaeh*, literally ‘fair, beautiful, handsome, attractive’ is usually predicated of women (Song 1:8. 15. 2:10. 13. 4:1. 7 etc); it is used here often of boys and youths (Gen. 39:6. 2 Sam. 14:25. Ez. 33:32), and even of animals (Gen. 41:2) and trees (Jer. 11:16. Ez. 31:3). Qoheleth uses the term once with reference to the enjoyment of life (5:17), but here it is undoubtedly an interpretative equivalent of *tōb* in Gen. 1:31 (God found all that he had made ‘very good’). However, one could question Qoheleth’s preference of *yāpaeh* to the term he found in the original. The reason for this choice probably could be that he is not so optimistic as the P writer, and even intended to temper the original sources unbounded optimism: he knows that man’s experiences here on earth are anything but pleasant!

The phrase “in its time” (*be’ittō*) serves to limit the beauty with which God has endowed the world of creation. Birth and death, and the series of events listed above have their own time and as they take place in accordance with the creator’s own will they are basically beautiful, even though, as far as man is concerned,

there is no such beauty or goodness in the ceaseless flux of things. Rather it is for him a source of suffering since he cannot understand its inner meaning.

The next clause in v. 11 offers considerable difficulty of explanation owing to the fact that the word *hā'olām* is polyvalent, and a number of explanations have been proposed by specialists:

1) The obvious sense of *'olām* is "eternity", "the timeless" as the *NAB* states it, or "a sense of time past and future," as the *NEB* renders it, and is to be interpreted in terms of Gen. 1:26 and Ps. 8:69. Qoheleth here, in his own original way seems to be interpreting the *imago Dei* in man, viz. as consisting in God's action of putting eternity into man's heart, though with this limitation that man cannot understand God's work. Man, however much he may strive to probe the mysteries of creation, is bound to fail and this tragic experience has its source in God himself. It is of interest to note here that Qoheleth uses in this context his favourite verb *nātan* (cf. v. 10). The *LXX* is in favour of his interpretation. Eternity or duration without beginning and end (Gen. 21: 33. Ex. 15: 18. Dt. 32: 40. Ps. 90: 2 etc.), as Jenni has pointed out, is not to be understood in the speculative or philosophical sense, and hence to argue that the Preacher has here in mind the "desiderium aeternitatis" would be anachronistic. The word *'olām* occurs 139 times in the OT.

2) By modifying the text slightly it is possible to obtain the rendering "He gave it (= *hakkōl*, "the all") the flux of time" (*Zeitverlauf*). The change demanded consists in reading *l'kollām*, "to all of them," instead of *b'libbām*, the reading found in the text, "into their heart," and what *olām* in this case would mean is the perpetual flux and flow of time, the unending, everrecurring succession of events to which everything God has created is subject. However such an understanding of the text is not warranted precisely because it is obtained through conjectural emendations that have nothing in their favour in the manuscripts or versions.

3) The Vulgate gives the rendering, "mundum tradidit disputatiōne eorum." Though *'olām* never has, in the OT, the meaning "mundus' world," this sense occurs in Sir 3: 18 and 16: 7, and

it is attested too in Arabic, Ethiopic, Aramaic, Syriac and late (rabbinic) Hebrew; compare the rabbinic phrase "world of falsehood," i. e., this world. Jewish scholars also state that the world shall last six thousand years.<sup>13</sup> The sense of v. 11 will therefore be that God has placed the love of the world in men's hearts, but despite this they will not be able to discover the work God has done from the beginning.

4) In Arabic there is the verbal root *'alima* (whose equivalent in Hebrew is *'ālam*), "to know, have knowledge, be cognizant, learn, perceive" etc., and from it is formed the noun *'ilm* (= *'aelaem*), "knowledge, learning, cognition etc." Some exegetes are of the view that Qoheleth originally wrote *'aelaem*, which in the course of transmission of the text, became *'olām*. The text thus would mean that God has put into man's heart the insatiable thirst for knowledge, but all his efforts to acquire it are doomed to failure; further more they will be a source of anguish, for "in much wisdom there is much sorrow" (1: 18).

5) As an explanation of the present clause, some interpreters have transposed the second and third consonants of the controversial term (*'lm 'ml*) and obtained the reading *'āmāl*, "trouble' labour, toil". In this way it would mean that God has put into man's heart, painful and fruitless labour in the sense that his striving after knowledge will bring, in its train, suffering, anguish and finally utter failure and disappointment. The problem with this explanation is that there is no support or evidence in the original text or in the ancient versions for the change that is demanded.

6) The most satisfactory position seems to be the one that demands that *'olām* be linked with the verb *ālam*, "to hide, conceal," occurring a few times in the OT. Confirmatory evidence is furnished also by Ugaritic, on the basis of which Dahood has rendered our term "ignorance".<sup>14</sup> Thus, the creator who is res-

13. M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, etc.* (New York, 1950) p. 108.

14. M. Dahood, *Biblica* 33(1952) p. 206; *ibid.* 43 (1962) p. 353.

ponsible for the antithetical series of happenings described in vv. 2-8 has also put ignorance of the appropriate time into the human heart, so that the *kairos* of things remains in utter darkness, a darkness that can never be penetrated.

**V. 12.** "I recognized:" *yāda'ti* literally means "I knew". The object of this experience is defined with the help of two infinitives, "to be glad", and "to do well". "The first, in the original *lîsmôah*, from the finite verb *sāmah*, "to rejoice, be glad", which is part of Qoheleth's favourite vocabulary (2: 10. 3: 22. 4: 16. 5: 18. 8: 15. 10: 19. 11: 8f.), points definitely to the enjoyment of the pleasures of this life; the second, *la'ašôt ṭôb*, lit. "to do good," is to be explained as a further affirmation of the need to enjoy life: the one thing man who is ignorant of God's designs can do here on earth is to enjoy the little he can.

**V. 13.** Twice in this verse Qoheleth makes use of his favourite word *kôl*. He mentions three things as God's gift to man, namely, eating, drinking and enjoying the fruit of one's labour - literally "that a man... sees good in all his labour". Here the term "good" is not to be taken particularly of the pleasures of sex, for it is used in the abstract and general sense and includes whatever possible enjoyment there is on the face of this earth. V. 13 serves to elucidate the meaning of V. 12, in as much as it specifies the varieties of enjoyment God has put at man's disposal.

**V. 14.** By the phrase "whatever God does", literally "all (*kôl*) that God does" is meant the series of events (vv. 2-8) taking place independently of man's will at the time fixed by God. This order of things will last *l'ôlām*, "for ever", i. e. endlessly. The Preacher emphasizes the fact that nothing can be added to or taken away from, what God has done, a line of thought that has its parallels in the OT (Dt. 4: 2. Prv. 30: 6) as well as in non-biblical wisdom literature. Thus the instructions of Ptah-hotep includes the admonition, "Take no word away, and add nothing thereto, and put not one thing in place of another."<sup>15</sup> The ultimate purpose of all this activity of God is that "he may be revered", lit. "so that they may fear from before his face". Here the thought is derived from the tradition of the sages who

15. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

teach that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prv. 1: 7).

V. 15. With a final assertion of the divinely fixed permanence of the series of events described in vv. 2-8 Qoheleth concludes his meditation on time. God has fixed everything here on earth in its own proper time and nothing of it will fall out of existence or disappear in so far as God remains ever ready to restore what might otherwise cease to be, and as a result the process described in vv. 2-8 goes on endlessly.

\* \* \* \*

Qoheleth's reflections on time, thus attest a marked difference from the rest of Old Testament. While the OT in general considers time as dynamic process of events wherein the transcendent God reveals himself and acts on behalf of his chosen people, the Preacher considers it essentially a mystery. For him this mystery consists in the fact that while everything in this universe happens according to a prefixed plan and time, it is inscrutable to the human mind.

Apart from Qohleth, for the rest of OT. time is a source of hope and consolation, for the people are sure of God's intervention in time for their sake. However, to the sage it is a source of suffering and unhappiness for the selfsame creator who has created an appropriate time for everything in this universe has also put ignorance of it into the human heart, so that it is left in utter darkness of the *kairos* after which it is constantly seeking.

Calvary, Trichur-680004

Jacob Chamakkala

# Time in the Perspectives of Jewish Apocalyptic

The people of Israel were fully aware of the significance of time,<sup>1</sup> and it was, from their point of view, a factor that was inseparably bound up with the onward march of the history of salvation. The tiny credo re-capitulating this history (Dt. 26: 5-9) commences with the call of the patriarchs, dwells upon the descent into Egypt and the experiences there, and comes to a close with the mention of the exodus and the occupation of the promised land.<sup>2</sup> The credo has nothing to say about the future, but when we come to the prophets of the sixth century, particularly Deutero-Isaiah, we see that the thought of the future looms large in their preaching. And speculations regarding the future and the consummation of time take upon an added significance from after 200 B. C. or so, especially in the apocalyptic writings. It is the purpose of this study to survey briefly the apocalyptic idea of the end of time; we shall first say a few words about the apocalyptic as a literary *genre*, and then we will be in a position to understand its views regarding the end.<sup>3</sup>

1. On the origin of this term, cf. Luke, "Indo-Iranian Terms Denoting Time," *Journal of Dharma* 1 (1976) p. 362, n. 2.

2. The OT, then, visualizes time in its chronological aspect, as pointed out by J. Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford, 1961), and *Biblical Words for Time* (London, 1962). On the connection between this understanding of time and the history of salvation, cf. W. Eichrodt, "Heilserfahrung und Zeitverständnis im Alten Testament," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 12 (1956) pp. 103-25. There are interesting and relevant details in R. C. Dentan (ed.), *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, 1966).

3. The bibliography on apocalyptic literature is really vast. In the present article only a few relevant titles are indicated. Translation with commentary in R. H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (2 vols., Oxford, 1913). E. Kautzsch (ed.), *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*

## I

The term apocalyptic goes back to the Greek verb *apokaluptō*, "to uncover (e. g., the head), disclose, reveal, make known," consisting of the pre-position *apo* (= Sanskrit *apa*, Latin *ab*, etc.) and the verbal root *kaluptō*, "to cover, conceal." This root is a modification of the IE base *k'el-*,<sup>4</sup> from among whose derivatives we may cite Latin *cella*, Sankrit *sāla-*, Old High German *halla*, "hall", etc.<sup>5</sup> The main idea conveyed by *k'el-* is that of keeping a thing concealed from others, so that *apokaluptō* naturally involves the removal of the cover or veil and the subsequent disclosure of what had so far been hidden.

We may now define the apocalyptic as a literary *genre* of ancient Judaism, purporting to convey to man a revelation, made directly by God himself or indirectly through a medium, of things hidden, and especially of things pertaining to the end-time, the consummation of history, the appearance of the Messiah, and the establishment of God's rule. The books claiming to embody these disclosures are the apocalypses, works which for the most part saw the light of day roughly between 175 B. C. and 150 A. D. The last book of the NT is representative of the apocalyptic genre, and in the OT itself there are sections which are veritable apocalypses.<sup>6</sup>

The Hebrew word that corresponds to Greek *apocaluptō* is *gālāh*, occurring 189 times in the Hebrew sections of the OT and

---

*des Alten Testaments* (2 vols., Tübingen, 1900). P. Riessler. *Altjüdisches Schriftum ausserhalb der Bibel* (Regensburg, 1928), Cf. too A. M. Denis, *Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs de l'Ancien Testament* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudépigrapha 1, Leiden, 1970). Denis and M. de Jonge are editing a series entitled *Pseudépigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece* (Leiden, 1967ff.).

4. The sign after *k* indicates its palatalization, i. e., it must be pronounced like the *k* in *catch*, *cat*, etc.

5. Cf. H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* I (Indogermanische Bibliothek. II. Reihe: Wörterbücher, Heidelberg, 1973) pp. 768f.

6. They are Is. 24-27, Ez. 1: 4-28, 10: 1-22, 37: 1-14, 41-48, Zch. 9-14, and Dan. 7-12.

cognate with Ethiopic *galawa* / *galaya*, “velare, obducere,” Phoenician *galay*, “to uncover,” Arabic *jalā*, “to become clear, revealed, uncovered”, etc.<sup>7</sup> In the reflexive / passive stem it is used of divine revelation: thus Yahweh’s glory is revealed (Is. 40: 5), and similarly also his arm (Is. 53: 1), his righteousness or salvific activity (Is. 56: 1), his word (1 Sam. 3: 7), etc.: at times what is revealed is his own august person (1 Sam. 2: 27, 3: 21; Is. 22: 14; cf. Gen. 35: 7). The root occurs in the Aramaic sections of the OT as well,<sup>8</sup> and the participial form *gālaeh*, “revelans,” is predicated of God in as much as he discloses his *rāz* (cf. below) or mysterious designs to his chosen ones (Dan. 2: 27, 29, 47). In the Greek version of Daniel there is the expression *ho apokaluptōn mystēria* (2: 28.29.47), “revelans mysteria”. We must also recall here that *gālāh* is part of the favourite vocabulary of the Qumrān sectarians.<sup>9</sup>

The object of apocalyptic revelation is invariably a mystery, denoted by the technical term *rāz* borrowed from Middle Iranian.<sup>10</sup> The Avesta or the collection of the sacred books of the Zoroastrians, employs the noun form *razah* – just twice “solitude, loneliness,” which, incidentally, corresponds to the well-known Sanskrit term *rahas-*, “secret”!<sup>11</sup> The Middle Iranian form passed into the various Aramaic dialects; compare Syriac *rāzā*, “secret”,

7. Detailed survey in H. -J. Zobel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testamente* I cols. 1018-31.

8. Cf. E. Vogt, *Lexicon linguae aramaicae Veteris Testamenti* (Rome, 1971) p. 35 (with reference to non biblical sources).

9. Cf. K. G. Kuhn, *Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexte* (Göttingen, 1960) p. 45.

10. By this term (at times also Middle Persian) is meant that form of the language of the Aryans of Iran which remained in common use roughly between 200 B. C. (?) and 650 A. D. For details, cf. O. Klíma, *Iranische Literaturgeschichte* (Iranische Texte und Hilfsbücher 4, Leipzig, 1959) pp. 24-65.

11. Cf. C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (repr., Berlin, 1960) col. 1514. Cf. too Luke, “Apocalyptic Literature,” *Biblehashyam* 1 (1975) p. 95 (where, through a lapsus oculi, wrong correspondences are given).

mystery, symbol, sign, sacrament, the Eucharist, the mass"; cf. the idiomatic expressions *ramshā' derāzē*, "evening of mysteries" (= Maunday Thursday), *shabta' derāzē*, "week of mysteries" (= Passion Week).

The word *rāz* was quite popular among the Qumrān sectarians,<sup>12</sup> and in the canonical book of Daniel it is used eight times (2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47. 4:6). In Dan. 2, for instance, the *rāz* is the kingdom that God will himself establish, a kingdom which will never be destroyed but will bring to naught all other kingdoms and will last for ever. The mystery in this case is something that belongs to the future, and later Jewish apocalypses bristle with accounts of the end of history, the appearance of the Messiah (cf. Dan. 7:13f.), the resurrection, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, etc. (cf. section II).

The mysteries of the past and the present too are the object of apocalyptic revelations. In fact, the apocalypses narrate the story of creation, the sin of angels, the deluge, etc., no doubt in dependence upon biblical tradition. The book of Jubilees (before 100 B. C.), for instance, is an imaginative elaboration of the story in Gen. 1-Ex. 12 (i. e., the history from Adam to the deliverance from Egypt). This work not only speaks of the events narrated in Genesis but also dates them in terms of the jubilee year occurring every forty-nine years and its subdivisions. Nay, it even claims that the Mosaic law, which existed with God from all eternity in heaven, was promulgated in the patriarchal age!

The mysteries of the present too form part of the revelation contained in the apocalypses: the various categories of angels, the different celestial regions, the stars, the winds etc. are part of the apocalyptic mystery. The book of Enoch, known also as iEnoch and Ethiopic Enoch, is remarkable for its fantastic geo-

12. Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 203f. Detailed discussion in F. Nötscher, *Zur theologischen Terminologie der Qumrantexte* (Bonner Biblische Beiträge 10, Bonn, 1956) pp. 71-75. Vogt, "‘Mysteria’ in Textibus Qumrān," *Biblica* 37 (1956) pp. 247-57.

graphy,<sup>13</sup> and the speculations concerning lightning, hail, snow, the winds (which are supposed to be twelve in number), the mountains, etc. However, in spite of the interest in the present and in the past, the mysteries of the future remain the most important object of apocalyptic revelation.

The communication of mysteries can take place directly, namely, when God immediately discloses them to his spokesmen: Daniel and his companions prayed and then "the mystery (i. e., the symbolical meaning of the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream) was revealed (in Aramaic *g'li*) to Daniel" (2:19). The passive form of the verb here must be understood as a periphrasis for the action of God who personally made known to Daniel the king's dream and its inner meaning. Generally, however, the divine communication is mediate. In later apocalypses the writers make a deliberate effort to safeguard God's transcendence and spirituality, and with this end in view all sorts of media of revelation are brought in: thus Daniel "had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed" (7:1). Angels<sup>14</sup> frequently appear as intermediaries between God and his mouthpieces: on God's orders Gabriel interpreted for Daniel the meaning of his vision of the ram with two horns (8:18-26). The same angel appeared to him again as he was meditating on Jeremiah's prophecies (9:21). In the second book of Esdras, whose body is made up of a series of seven apocalyptic visions, the mediator and interpreter of God's revelation is the angel Uriel, who even chides the seer at times: 'You are not a better judge than God, or wiser than the Most High' (7:19)!

13. Discussed by P. Grelot, "La geographic mythique d'Henoch et sources orientales," *Revue Biblique* 65 (1958) pp. 33-69; J. T. Milik, "Henoch au pays des aromates (ch. xxvii à xxxii). Fragments arameens de la grotte 4 de Qumran," *ibid.*, pp. 70-77.

14. Jewish angelology has been regarded as something borrowed from the Persians. Cf. A. Kohut, *Jüdische Angelologie und Dämonologie in ihrer Abhängigkeit vom Parsismus* (Leipzig, 1966); "Was hat die Talmudische Eschatologie aus dem Parsismus aufgenommen?" *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 21 (1867) pp. 552-91.

The writers of apocalypses, convinced as they were of the ineffableness of divine mysteries and the inadequacy of human language to convey God's revelatory word, make a copious use of allegories, parables and symbols, so that their writings remain mysterious, laden with the most abstruse and fantastic types of images. In what follows, a few examples of apocalyptic imagery and symbolism are given.

Faunal or animal imagery is part of the apocalyptic. Ezekiel sees four mysterious beings with the aspects of man, lion, ox and eagle (1: 10).<sup>15</sup> Daniel notices the four winds of heaven stirring the sea and four great beasts coming out of it: the first was like a lion and had eagle's wings, the second like a bear with three ribs in its mouth, the third like a leopard, and the fourth like a monster who has iron teeth (7: 2-7). These animals symbolize the empires of the Babylonians, Medes, the Persians and the Greeks. Reference is also made to ten horns, which, according to the context, typify the ten rulers who succeeded Alexander. At another time Daniel saw a ram with two horns, and a he-goat, with a horn in-between its eyes, which came from the west and overpowered the first animal (8: 3-8); the two creatures point to the Persian and Greek empires.

In non-biblical apocalypses the faunal imagery becomes something most monstrous: Esdras sees an eagle coming from the sea, and this unusual creature has twelve feathered wings and three heads, and out of the bird's wings there grew up opposing wings which, however, at the end became petty, puny organs. The mysterious bird arose on its talons and began commanding the wings! On hearing its orders, the seer looked and found that the voice came not from the head but from the midst of its body (2 Esd. 11). What exactly is this monster? It is a symbol of the Roman empire!

Faunal imagery is made use of when there is need to describe the Messiah. Esdras' vision of the eagle was followed by that of a lion-like being that came forth roaring from the wilderness and began speaking to the eagle with a man's voice.

15. Cf. Luke, "Ezekiel's Vision of Yahweh's Glory," *Indian Ecclesiastical Studies* 1 (1962) pp. 144 ff., 196 ff.

Frightened beyond measure, the seer arose from sleep and prayed to God to enlighten him on the meaning of this vision. Here is the answer that was vouchsafed to him: "And as for the lion whom you saw rising out of the forest and roaring and speaking to the eagle and reproving him for his unrighteousness, and as for all his words that you have heard, this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days..." (12: 31-39).

The symbolical use of numbers is a distinctive feature of the apocalyptic. Seven is the most sacred number which, precisely for this reason, occurs quite frequently in the works belonging to the present *genre*: there are the seven days of creation (4 Mac. 14: 8), the seven heavens (2 Esd. 7: 81-87. Test. Levi 2: 7-3: 10. 2 En. 3: 21), seven angels (Test. Levi 8: 2ff.), seven bands of angels (2 En. 19: 1), seven natures (2 En. 30: 9), seven powers of man (2 En. 30: 9), seven substances from which man is formed (2 En. 30: 8), seven ways of the souls of the good and the wicked (2 Esd. 7: 81-99), seven orders or emotions (ibid. 7: 91), seven senses (Test. Ruben 2: 3-9; cf. Sir. 17: 4), seven spirits of deceit (Test. Ruben 2: 1f. 3: 3-6. Test. Levi 3: 2), and so on. 2 Esd. claims to the record of seven revelations; for seven days the seer went into a field of flowers and prayed (9: 23-27. 12: 40-50), and after these seven days he had a dream (13: 1).

The number seventy too is sacred: "... the Lord... came down from his highest heavens and brought down with him seventy ministering angels... He commanded them to teach the seventy families which sprang from the loins of Noah seventy languages" (Test. Append. I: 8: 4-6). Seventy weeks of years are decreed for the fulfilment of prophecies (Dan. 9: 24), and seventy years are to pass before the end of Jerusalem's destruction (Dan. 9: 2). Another sacred number is forty: Esdras dictated the scriptures to his scribes for forty days; they sat forty days, wrote during the day and ate bread at night (2 Esd. 14: 44). Reference has already been made to the book of Jubilees and its division of history into periods covering forty-nine years. Ten, Twelve and so on<sup>16</sup> are also sacred numbers but without the significance seven, seventy, etc. have.

16. Thus, there are twelve winds (En. 76), twelve woes (2 Bar. 27: 1-13), twelve showers (2 Bar. 56-68), etc.

A last detail to be mentioned here is the indeterminate use of language: the mystery which is the object of revelation is so sublime that human words can never express it, and hence the copious use of terms implying approximation (e. g., "as, like, similar," etc.). Daniel, for example, saw "One like a son of man" approaching the Ancient of days (7:13); Henoch had the vision of God's throne: "... its appearance was as crystal, and the wheels there of as the shining sun..." (2 En. 14:15-24).<sup>17</sup>

The discussion so far has been meant to make the non-specialist acquainted with the literary *genre* apocalyptic. This section is brought to a close with a few words about its origin.<sup>18</sup> The German scholar Lorenz Dürr thought that Jewish apocalyptic originated with the prophet Ezekiel,<sup>19</sup> who was himself familiar with earlier Semitic traditions. Paul D. Hanson speaks of a "Proto-Apocalyptic" represented by Second Isaiah, an "Early Apocalyptic" with a pessimistic outlook found in Third Isaiah, Second Zechariah and Is. 24-27, and finally of the "Late Apocalyptic" culminating in Daniel and Henoch.<sup>20</sup> What has been discussed here is, of course, the third variety, whose origins, however, lie far beyond the early part of the second century B. C.<sup>21</sup>

Specialists have clearly shown that the apocalyptic has its moorings in Israel's prophetic tradition,<sup>22</sup> which represented the

17. In the rear of this there stands the conviction of faith that human language is inadequate to express things divine.

18. Cf. D. S. Russel, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (The Old Testament Library, London, 1964) pp. 15-35.

19. Cf. his monograph *Die Stellung des Propheten Ezechiel in der israelitisch-judischen Apokalyptik* (Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen 9/1, Munster, 1923).

20. Cf. his work *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, 1975).

21. One may even hold that the apocalyptic *genre* ultimately goes back to the ancient Semitic myth of the godhead's victory over chaos!

22. This has been clearly shown by B. Vawter, "Apocalyptic: its Relation to Prophecy," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22(1960) pp. 33-46.

visionary, charismatic and dynamic world view in contra-distinction to the hieratic, institutional and static one championed by the clergy. Because of the pressure of circumstances the men who were visionaries gave up all hope of the establishment of the kingdom of bliss here on earth and transferred all their expectations to the indefinite future, a future that will dawn upon humanity at the time fixed by God. The hopelessness the apocalypticists felt *vis-à-vis* this world adequately accounts for the pessimism that permeates their writings, what sustains them in the face of all this is, in the final analysis, a most profound faith in God, the lord and master of history.

The apocalyptic takes for granted some sort of dualism and clearly teach such doctrines as the resurrection, the last judgement, etc. (cf. section II). All these ideas are also met with in Zoroastrianism. Though the problem of Judaism's dependence upon the Persian religion has often been discussed, there is no consensus of opinion among scholars. The following statement by the Czecho-Slovakian Iranist Otakar Klima is representative of one particular trend of thought: "Es scheint (nach den neuen Forschungen), dass die jüdische und christliche Eschatologie entweder persischen Ursprungs sind oder in ihrer endgültigen Ausgestaltung starke persische Einflüsse erfahren haben."<sup>23</sup>

## II

In the Aramaic language the term denoting time is *zemān*, to which a Semitic as well as non-Semitic (i. e., Persian) origin

23. *Op. cit.*, p. 18. This has also been the position of theologians, like E. Eoklen, *Die Verwandtschaft der jüdisch-christlichen mit der persischen Eschatologie* (Göttingen, 1902). W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (repr. of the 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1966). E. Stave, *Über den Einfluss des Parsismus auf das Judentum* (Haarlem, 1898). Everything in the Judaeo-Christian tradition is reduced to an Iranian mystery of redemption by R. Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium* (Bon, 1921). The professional Iranist L. H. Mills has been a consistent advocate of the Persian origin of Jewish eschatology; from among his several works we may single out *Our own Religion in Ancient Persia* (Chicago, 1913). The opposite

has been assigned.<sup>24</sup> It is found in the book of Daniel<sup>25</sup> but not in the Qumrān sources which for their part, employ the term *qēs*, "end,"<sup>26</sup> and also 'ēt, the common Hebrew word for time.<sup>27</sup> The apocalyptic visionaries teach that time has been created by God: according to the author of 2 Enoch, God divided time, and from time he fixed the years, from the years the months and from the months the days, which are naturally seven in number. The days were further subdivided into hours, and all this was done

position in an exaggerated form is represented by the orthodox Jewish scholar Isidor Scheftelowitz, *Die altpersische Religion und das Judentum* (Stuttgart, 1920.) Latest discussions in Fr. Konig (Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna), *Zarathustras Jenseitvorstellungen und das Alte Testament* (Vienna, 1964). Finally a couple of scholars did hold the view that Judaism influenced Parsism; cf. F. Spiegel, "Der Einfluss des Semitismus auf das Avesta," *Arische Studien I* (Leipzig, 1874) pp. 45-61, and R. Pettazzoni, *La religione di Zarathustra* (Rome, 1920).

24. Summary of discussions in W. Gesenius—F. Buhl, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (17th ed., repr., Leipzig, 1921) pp. 200 f. The Semitic root postulated is Accadian *samānu*, "to determine," whose initial consonant became, in Aramaic, voiced as a result of the influence of *m*; thus H. Bauer-P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* (repr., Hildesheim, 1962) § 7h (p. 33); cf. too H. H. Schaeder, "Der iranische Zeitgott und sein Mythus," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 95 (1941) pp. 268-99 (pp. 269 f.). A Persian origin is postulated by W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (New York, 1968) p. 262 n. 153; Scheftelowitz, *Arisches im Alten Testament* (diss., Königsberg, 1901) p. 45; S. Teleghi, "Essai sur la phonétique des emprunts iraniens en arameen talmudique," *Journal Asiatique* 226 (1935) pp. 177 ff. (p. 242).

25. Cf. Vogt, *op. cit.* (n. 8) pp. 57 f.

26. Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 194. Discussions in Nötscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 167 ff.

27. This term, occurring 297 times in the Hebrew Bible, has been derived from the Hebrew roots 'ānāh, "to be concerned," 'ānan, "to appear," and yā'ad, "to determine;" it has also been linked with Accadian *ettu* (from *entu* ; on the various suggestions, cf. Bauer-Leander, *op. cit.*, § 68u (p. 255).

so that man might reflect on the mystery of time and adjust his life (65 : 3-4).

Time is viewed dualistically by the apocalypticists. 2 Esdras teaches clearly that "the Most High has made not one age but two" (7 : 50), to wit, *hā olām hazzahē*, "this world" (age) and *hāolām habbāh*, "the world (age) to come" (in Greek *ho aiōn mellōn*).<sup>28</sup> The present age under the control of the devil, known by such names as Satan, Matsema and Beliar.<sup>29</sup> It is full of sorrow and frailties, "too full to enjoy what is promised in due time for the godly" (2Esd. 4 : 27). The reason for this tragedy is Adam's sin: "... when Adam transgressed my decrees the creation came under judgement. The entrances to this world (or, age) were made narrow, painful, and arduous, few and evil, full of perils and grinding hardship" (ibid. 7 : 11 f.). Adam's sin has affected his posterity: "... how much better it would have been if the earth had never produced Adam at all...! O Adam, what have you done? Your sin was not your fall alone; it was ours also, the fall of your descendants" (ibid. 7 : 116-118). Because of the first man's sin, "the wicked heart<sup>30</sup> has grown up in us, which has estranged us from God's ways, brought us into corruption and the way of death..." (7 : 48). The span of time between Adam's sin (or creation) and the dawn of the age of bliss constitutes human history, and the apocalypticists are unanimous

28. This distinction was well known among the rabbis as well (cf. S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology. Major Concepts of the Talmud* [Schocken Paperbacks, New York, 1961] *passim*).

29. The first of the three terms need no comment. As for the remaining two, Matsema is the modification of Hebrew *maštēmāh*, "animosity," occurring twice in the Bible (Hos. 9 : 7 f.) and going back to the verbal root *śātam*, "to bear a grudge," which is etymologically related to *śātan* (whence Satan). The last name is a deformation of Belial, in Hebrew *h̄etiyya al*, "worthlessness" (27 times).

30. On man's evil tendencies, cf. Schechter, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-63.

in proposing a "pessimistic-dualistic view of the Satanic corruption of the total world-complex."<sup>31</sup>

History is predetermined by God, so that what has long ago been determined will necessarily be done (Dan. 11: 36). Some writers are of the persuasion that the element of determination has its source in the heavenly bodies which are controlled by angels who are entrusted with the fate of both individuals and nations: this line of thought is developed in 1En. 75-90, and the book of Jubilees teaches that Henoch recorded in a book the signs from heaven and described exactly all that would happen to man till the day of judgment. The theme of predetermination occurs in the Qumrān documents as well,<sup>32</sup> but the apocalyptic seers, while admitting the influence of celestial bodies on human history, did not in any way doubt God's sovereignty over the historical process.

History, as it unfolds itself, follows a predetermined plan. It is schematically arranged, and God is said to have disclosed the future history of the world to Moses (Jub. 1: 4. 26). 2Esd. 14: 5 notes how God told Moses "of many wonders, showing him the secrets of the ages and the end of time". The schematization of history is most conspicuously seen in the book of Daniel which divides historical time into seventy weeks of years, with subdivision into three periods. Seven weeks elapse from the going forth of the edict to restore Jerusalem till the coming of an anointed prince (9: 25); there now follows a span of sixty-two weeks, after which there will arise a terrible crisis (9: 26), lasting through the remaining one week (9: 27). The interpretation of this scheme of history is difficult, though this does not effect the basic point we are discussing. The Testament of Levi (16-17) refers to the period of seventy weeks of years, and 1Enoch teaches that the time from the Flood to the end of the world will cover seventy generations (10: 12).

31. Thus R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* I (London, 1952) pp. 4 f. Bultmann goes on to add that this dualistic view is expressed in the special doctrine of the two aeons (*ibid.*, p. 5).

32. Cf. Nötscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-82.

Daniel also gives a division of history into four periods, each symbolized by a special metal. The giant statue Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron (2 : 32); these metals stand for the Babylonian, Median, Persian and Greek empires respectively. What we have in Daniel's account is, then, a conception of history as a sequence of periods predetermined by God's will, which, to be sure, will be made known to the apocalyptic seers.

The division of world history into periods and an unbridled indulging in symbolical arithmetic become more and more fantastic in later apocalypses like *Jubilees*, *Assumption of Moses*, and *1Enoch*, but as far as we are concerned the moot problem is, whence did the author of Daniel, for instance, derive his idea of the four ages? The answer seems to be that he was inspired by Zoroastrian tradition which taught that the world will last for 12,000 years and divided this duration into four ages of 3,000 years each.<sup>33</sup> During the first period *Ahura Mazdāh*,<sup>34</sup> "the Wise Lord", produced spiritual beings, and during the second *Angra Mainyu*, "the evil spirit", tried to oppose the Wise Lord. The end of the second age also marked the emergence of the prophet Zarathushtra as the preacher of the true faith which was destined to flourish and bring men to the way of salvation, and finally during the fourth period *Saoshyant*, "the deliverer", who is none other than Zarathushtra *redivivus*, makes his appearance, and the evil spirit is decisively and finally routed. Daniel chapters 2 and 7 represent, according to many authorities, a modification of the Zoroastrian idea of the four ages of world history.<sup>35</sup>

33. On the world-ages in Zoroastrianism, cf. H. S. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des Alten Iran* (Mitteilungen der vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft, Bd. 43, repr., Osnabrück, 1966) pp. 27-32.

34. The names of God and his adversary in the Avesta are briefly discussed in Luke, "The Tragedy of Freedom: Man in the Thought of Zarathushtra," *Jeevadhara* 4 (1975) pp. 148ff.

35. Compare J. A. Montgomery, *Daniel* (The International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh, repr., 1950) p. 188 (cf. too n. 33).

Apocalyptic thinkers are unanimous in affirming that the time immediately prior to the end will be one of great tribulation. "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time" (Dan. 12:1). What 2 Esdras has to say about the happenings of the last times is quite typical of the apocalyptic view of the end. "Keep careful count yourself; when you see that some of the signs predicted have already happened, then you will understand that the time has come when the Most High will judge the world he has created" (9:1 f.). There will be earthquakes, insurrections, plots among nations, unstable government, and panic among rulers (9:3). Friends will become enemies (5:9. 6:24), men will slaughter their own kith and kin, sons and grandsons (1En. 100:1 f.). "There will be a great increase in wickedness, worse than anything that you now see or have ever heard of" (2 Esd. 5:3), and the way of truth will remain hidden, so that faith will disappear from the face of the earth (5:2).

Wild beasts will roam everywhere, and women will give birth to monsters (5:9); the world will become a desert, the sun will shine at night and the moon during the day, trees will drip blood, stones will speak, and the course of the stars will be changed; chasms will appear everywhere, spurting out flames incessantly (5:4-8).

As the end approaches with great velocity, there will appear the great adversary, the so-called antichrist of Christian tradition. Ezekiel refers to Gog of the land of Magog, the leader of those who oppose Yahweh (chps. 38-39), and the author of Daniel visualizes Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-64), the Seleucid ruler of Syria and persecutor of the Jews, as the great opponent. He speaks boastfully (7:8), utters words against God himself (7:25. 11:36), and changes the sacred ordinances (7:25), but he will soon be deprived of sovereignty (7:26). In some apocalypses the arch-enemy is called Beliar; the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs depict him as God's foe, and many, forsaking God, will cleave to him, but he will in the end be routed and hurled into fire (Test. Judah 25:3). The figure of Beliar, we may rightly presume, is the person of Angra Mainyu in Jewish dress.

That the world will be destroyed by fire is clearly affirmed by the apocalypticists, and occasionally even water is introduced as the agent of final destruction. The tradition regarding the flood in Genesis has inspired the belief that the world will be swept out of existence by a fresh inundation, and according to Zoroastrian eschatology fire has a decisive role to play in the events of the end-time.<sup>36</sup> It is worth noting that the idea of an ordeal by fire was not altogether unknown to OT sources (Is. 66:15f. Jer. 4:4. Ez. 21:31. Am. 5:6 etc.), and the Qumrān sources too continue this tradition.<sup>37</sup> After the great destruction the world will return to the original state of silence before its creation for seven days, and no man will then be left alive (2Esd. 7:30).

The end, however, marks the commencement of a new beginning, a conception that is ultimately inspired by the myth that the *Endzeit* (end-time) will be a recurrence of the *Urzeit* (primordial times). The apocalypticists with a predilection for a millennium describe the new beginning as the coming back of paradise,<sup>38</sup> which is at times visualized as something purely spiritual and at other times as something terrestrial, or even both terrestrial and spiritual. In any case paradise is a place of bliss, standing in opposition to hell where the wicked are tormented (2Esd. 7:1).

<sup>36</sup> For exhaustive discussions with sources in translation, cf. R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961) pp. 102-21. Highly cautious comparative study of the Jewish and Persian traditions in R. Meyer, *Die biblische Vorstellung vom Weltbrand. Eine Untersuchung über die Beziehungen zwischen Zoroastrianismus und Judentum* (Bonnaer orientalistische Studien 4, Bonn, 1956).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Nötscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 159f.

<sup>38</sup> English term is a modification of Greek *paradiso*, “pari-” (Latin *parvus*, which is itself an adaptation of Avestan *par-θava-* “valley, arable area” (which is Old Persian *parθavā-*, Elamite *par-ta-*, Hebrew *par-*, Armenian *par-*), etc.). The element *par-*, corresponds to Greek *peri-*, Sanskrit *par-*, etc., and *da-* (from H. *da-* “to be”) is etymologically related to Greek *teichos*, *teichos*, Sanskrit *da-*, *da-*, etc. In the Avesta itself the term denoting the bliss of “heaven + rahiš” (literally, “optimum”) (cf. Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12; for discussion, cf. H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras nach dem Awesta dargestellt* (repr., Hildesheim, 1971) pp. 202f.

36-38). It is most important to bear in mind that in the rear of the myth of the return of the paradisal age of bliss there stands the most unmythical conviction of faith that the God of Israel is the lord and master of history, that he directs history to the goal he has himself fixed.

Closely bound up with the theme of paradise is the thought of the kingdom, a kingdom visualized as the climax of the onward movement of history. According to the book of Daniel the kingdom makes its appearance all of a sudden, destroying the giant image representing the empires of the world (2:31-34), but it will never be destroyed. On the contrary, it will last for ever (2:44). This kingdom comes into being through God's special activity, and is entrusted to the Saints of the Most High<sup>39</sup> who will exercise power in it with the Lord's own authorization (7:13. 18. 27). From this kingdom, which is going to be everlasting, all evil will be eliminated (7:18.27), and its subjects will be both the surviving members of the family of Israel as well as some of the departed ones who will be raised to life (12:2).<sup>40</sup>

Some apocalypticists depict the kingdom as a temporary, intermediary one, which will be followed by the age to come, i. e., the unending age of bliss. 1 Enoch, for example, divides history into ten weeks, of which seven weeks which were a period of

---

39. The meaning and origin of this phrase has been the object of much discussion; cf. C. H. W. Breckelmanns, "The Saints of the Most High and their Kingdom," *Oudtestamentiesche Studien* 14 (1965) pp. 305-29). J. Coppens-L. Dequeker, *Le Fils de l'homme et les Saints du Très-Haut en Daniel VII, dans les apocryphes et dans le Noveau Testament* (Louvain, 1661). R. Hahnhart, "Die Heiligen des Höchsten," *Hebräische Wortforschung. Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von W. Baumgartner* (Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 16, Leiden, 1967) pp. 90-101. M. Noth, "The Holy Ones of the Most High," *The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Essays* (Edinburgh, 1966) pp. 215-28. Since in the OT "saints" (in Hebrew *q'doshim*) are always celestial beings, Noth and Hahnhart argue that the persons concerned in Dan. 7 are the angels, but against this Breckelmanns stresses the fact that angels are never the recipients of kingship in the Bible, insisting, too, at the same time, on the need to take into account the context (*op. cit.*, pp. 328f.)

iniquity are already past, and the beginning of the eighth week marks the dawn of the Messianic kingdom that will last till the tenth week (91:12f.). At the end of the tenth week there will take place the great judgement (91:14-17). According to 2 Enoch the world will last 7,000 years (33:1), i. e., 6,000 years from creation to the end, plus a span of 1,000 years when the kingdom will be in existence; after the lapse of this period there will commence the age of bliss which will have no end (33:2).<sup>41</sup>

The establishment of the kingdom, though obviously the work of God, is inseparable from an eschatological figure appointed by God, who has both this-worldly and transcendental, temporal and supratemporal, national and universalistic features, and who is called either Messiah or the Son of Man. In some of the apocalypses these two conceptions of the eschatological personage remain distinct, while in others they may be said to overlap, but nowhere are they explicitly fused together. The word *māšiāh*, "Messiah," occurs a few times in the Hebrew Bible with the meaning "anointed, unctus,"<sup>42</sup> but it has nowhere the special sense given it by the apocalyptic tradition of Judaism and the NT. As for the phrase Son of Man, it corresponds to Aramaic *bar*

40. Dan. 12:2 speaks of the "many" (in Hebrew *rabbim*) who "sleep in the ground of dust;" the sense here is not exclusive, a majority to the exclusion of the minority, but inclusive, all without exception. "Many" is a Hebraism which corresponds to "all."

41. Chiliastic hopes were alive among Christians as well, and specimens of them are furnished by the fragments of Papias of Hieropolis preserved by Eusebius (E. Schwartz, *Eusebius Kirchengeschichte* [Kleine Ausgabe, Berlin, 1952] III:38). 2 Esd. refers to the Messiah's reign of 400 years, after which he dies, and there ensues the age of bliss (7: 30f.).

42. For a most competent presentation of the Messianic traditions, cf. S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford, 1956); for the Jewish point of view, cf. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (London, 1956). The Qumran material is surveyed by A. S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* (Assen, 1962). The ancient Oriental evidence is covered in full by Dürr, *Ursprung und Aushau der israelisch-jüdischen Heilandserwartung* (Berlin, 1925).

*nāshā'* (literally, "the son of man"),<sup>43</sup> which can have the generic sense "any man;" a sense which, at least, in the case of apocalyptic literature, must be classified as minimistic.

Dan. 7:13 speaks of the coming on the clouds of heaven of "one like a son of man,"<sup>44</sup> who approached the Ancient of Days, and to whom were given sovereignty, glory and kingship. In the context of Dan. 7, describing an event that takes place in the very presence of God, the person of the Son of Man remains mysterious and transcendent, but the moot problem is whether he is an individual<sup>45</sup> or the personification of a collectivity. However, since 7:18 describes the Saints of the Most High as the recipients of the royal power conferred by God himself, it follows that the one like the Son of Man is this group.

Of all the apocalyptic works it is 1 Enoch, or the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, that has the most to say about the Son of Man, for he is introduced sixteen times in the so-called Book of Parables (37-71).<sup>46</sup> 46:1-4 offers us a description that is certainly dependent upon Dan. 7. The visionary sees one who has a

---

43. Also *bar', nāshā'*; both the forms are definite and correspond to Hebrew *baen hā'ādām*. The indefinite forms are *bar nāsh* and *bar' nash* (in Hebrew *baen 'ādām*), "a son of man." There are numerous problems connected with these expressions, which cannot of course, be touched upon in this study.

44. In the original there is the indefinite form *bar', nāsh* (cf. n. 43).

45. Scholars who uphold the individualistic interpretation have claimed as antecedent the myth of the first man that was widespread in the Orient. The Gnostics had their *anthropos*, and among the Iranians Yima (Sanskrit Yama) and Gayomart were both given the honour of being the first man; cf. A. Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l'histoire des Iraniens*, Stockholm-Leiden, 1917, 1934); exhaustive treatment of the Aryan legend of Yama, the first man and the first king. S. S. Hartmann, *Gayōmart. Etude sur le syncrétisme dans l'ancien Iran* (Uppsala, 1953); an exaggerated and somewhat one-sided presentation of the subject.

46. Cf. G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (Fontana Books, London, 1976) p. 173. The material in Henoch N. Messel, *Der Menschensohn in den Bilderreden des Henoch* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für

head of days and white as wool, and with him another being whose countenance has the appearance of a man. When the seer questioned the angel concerning "that son of man," he got the following reply: "This is the son of man who has righteousness ... And this son of man... shall loosen the reins of the strong and break the teeth of sinners." In Enoch literature the Son of Man has become a wholly mythical personage who is pre-existent and who makes his appearance in the most mysterious fashion, but can it be affirmed that he is the Messiah? Not all scholars answer this question in the affirmative, and even when he is invested with certain Messianic features and is called the anointed one of God (48:10, 52:4), there is the possibility that all these represent secondary developments. On the other hand W. F. Albright is inclined to think that the two figures of the Messiah and the Son of Man were combined together before the age of Jesus,<sup>47</sup> and if this were the case, Enoch's son of Man can be the Messiah himself.

The Messianic hope of the apocalypticists has several unusual

die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 35, Giessen, 1922), and E. Sjöberg, *Der Menschensohn im äthiopischen Henochbuch* (Acta regiae societatis humaniorum litterarum 41, Lund, 1946). A few remarks are added here about the vocabulary of the Ethiopic text. The expressions used are *walda b<sup>e,e</sup>st*, "son of a man," *walda sāb'i*, "son of a warrior," and *walda b<sup>e,e</sup>st*, "son of a woman" (this being a secondary phrase). The word *walda*, "son," is a derivative of the common Semitic root *walada*, "parere, generare, procreare, regenerare; b<sup>e,e</sup>st means "vir, maritus, homo," and its feminine form b<sup>e,e</sup>st, "sempina, mulier, uxor, conjux;" sāb'i signifies "bel-lator, bellicosus" (cf. Hebrew *ṣābā'*, "army"). The Ethiopic NT attests the cumbersome expression *walda' gwāla 'em (m) aheyaw*, "son of the offspring of the mother of the living!" Ethiopic , *gw<sup>e</sup>l* has meanings such as "proles, suboles, homo, homines, genus humanum." Meanings are given here according to P. G. da Maggiora, *Vocabulario etiopico-italiano-latino* (Asmara, 1953); the writer does not have at his disposal A. Dillmann, *Lexicon linguae aethiopicae* Leipzig, 1855).

47. Cf. *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (New York, 1957) pp. 378 ff.

features about it, the most remarkable among which is the belief in the coming of a levitical (priestly) and Davidic (royal) Messiah, and the Qumrān sources too look forward to the coming of two Messiahs! The so-called "Manual of Discipline" (I QS) refers to the coming of a prophet and the Messiahs<sup>48</sup> of Aaron and Israel (IX:11). The Messiah of Israel can only be the warrior Messiah of popular expectations. The "Damascus Document" on the other hand mentions the Messiah of Aaron and Israel (XIV:19. XIX:10. XX:1), and since 4QDb also uses the singular form Messiah,<sup>49</sup> there is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the reading furnished by the Damascus Document. The problem created by the expectation of two Messiahs, and the explanations put forward by specialists to account for this unusual belief, cannot be discussed here. The only thing pointed out here is that some scholars deny that the Qumrān texts teach a doctrine of two Messiahs.

When the long-expected Messiah appears, there will occur the resurrection of the dead, and the earliest record of this hope is Is. 26:19, a passage from Is. 24-27, an apocalypse that does not go beyond the fourth century. The text is thus rendered in the New English Bible: "But thy dead live, their bodies will rise again. They that sleep in the earth will awake... and the earth will bring those long dead to birth again."<sup>50</sup> The only other text in the Hebrew Bible referring explicitly to the resurrection is Dan. 12:2, which runs thus: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake, some to everlasting life and some to the reproach of everlasting abhorrence." Later apocalypses explicitly teach the fact of the resurrection, though they are not agreed on such details as its nature, time, place, the persons affected, etc. A universal resurrection, affecting the Gentiles and the wicked, as well as admitted by some apocalypticists. 2 Esd., for instance, mentions "the nations that have been raised from the dead" (7:37).

48 In Hebrew *m<sup>e</sup>shîhê*, which is the plural construct (genitive) form; cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

49. Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 321 (with appeal to Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Desert of Judaea* [London, 1959] p. 125).

50. It is minimistic to argue that the passage refers only to Israel's national restoration.

The risen ones are in possession of transformed, supramundane, spiritual bodies, described by the visionaries with the help of such expressions as garments of glory, garments of light, shining light, etc. Those who have risen again "have moved out of the shadow of this world and have received shining robes from the Lord"; they "have laid aside their mortal dress and put on the immortal" (2Esd. 2:39.45).

Bodily resurrection is a doctrine that is virtually contained in the preaching of Zarathushtra,<sup>51</sup> and late Zoroastrian sources dwell at length on the final resurrection and its different aspects. The nature of the risen body has been the object of intense speculation among the Zoroastrians, whose theories and opinions remained popular even after Iran was converted to Islam<sup>52</sup>. There are authorities who are inclined to believe that the Jewish people borrowed the idea of the resurrection of the body from the Persians.

The resurrection is followed by the last judgment, executed by God himself or by the Messiah, and according to some texts the persons judged are the Gentiles, but there are also passages according to which the wicked from among the Jews and the Gentiles are subjected to judgment. The importance the visionaries attached to the final judgment may be gathered from the following statement: "When the Most High was creating the world..., he first of all planned the judgment" (2 Esd. 7:70..

What will be the fate of those who are going to be condemned? "But as for those who have rejected the ways of the Most High,... their spirits enter no settled abode, but roam thenceforward in torment, grief and sorrow... at the sight of the Most High in his glory, they break down in shame, waste away in remorse, shrivel with fear remembering how they have sinned against him in their lifetime" (2 Esd. 7:79. 87). The just shall

51. Cf. König, "Der Glaube an die Auferstehung in den Gathas," *Forderasiatische Studien. Festschrift Viktor Christian* (Vienna, 1956) pp. 69ff.; cf. too Lommel, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

52. Details in H. Corbin, *Terre celeste et corps de résurrection de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shi'ite* (Paris, 1961).

"exult to see the glory of God who will receive them as his own, and they shall enter into rest" (*ibid.* v. 91). Judgment, punishment and bliss are part of the eschatology of the Zoroastrians,<sup>53</sup> and the view has often been expressed that these doctrines profoundly influenced Judaism, but even when this is affirmed, it is not denied that the Judaeo-Christian hell has nothing much in common with the Zoroastrian one of stench and filth<sup>54</sup>.

### III

The apocalyptic *genre* visualizes time in its chronological aspect, i. e., as an onward movement guided by God himself and coming to a stand-still at the term he himself personally fixed long ago. The appearance of the Messiah, the resurrection and the judgment are events that constitute time in its chronological sequence, or, in other words, the history of salvation. The apocalyptic is, then necessarily bound up with the chosen nation's eschatological hope. The Israelites knew that God would one day intervene in history and bring about the dawn of bliss, and the expectation of the end of the present order of things became all the more fervid when they happened to be in distress. This is exactly what we come across in apocalyptic literature. The phantasmagoric vision of the apocalypticists, with all its childishness, inflated hopes, high expectations, exaggerated nationalism, etc., is the literary expression of their faith in the eschatological consummation.

In the background of all this there stands a genuine religious experience. There is certainly nothing unusual or unnatural if persons who have great faith in God, flee to him in their hour of need and wait for a response from him, and experience within themselves the divine touch. Once they know that God has deigned to speak to them personally, they hasten to put in black and white the message, they feel, the Lord wants them to communicate to his chosen people. That which gives the apocalyptic its

53. For an exposition by a Parsee scholar, cf. J. C. D. Pavry, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a Future Life. From Death to the Individual Judgment* (Indo-Iranian Series 11, 2nd ed., New York, 1965). P. Gignou, "L'enfer et le paradis d'après les sources pehllevies," *Journal Asiatique* 256 (1968) pp. 219-45. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-21.

54. Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

significance is doubtless the religious experience from which it draws its origin.

When Jesus began to preach about the advent of the kingdom he was following the apocalyptic tradition, and he was also expecting the imminent consummation.<sup>55</sup> This expectation was not literally fulfilled, for his death and resurrection did not usher in the end of history, but rather there followed the indefinite postponement of the eagerly awaited end. The first believers looked forward to the Lord's speedy return, and only the subsequent course of events made them change their mind. Does this all mean that Jesus' dream regarding the future has no significance for us? Can we still retain his message regarding the imminence of the eschaton?

As long as the expectation of the coming Kingdom of God in any form can be our expectation, we remain within the framework of Jesus' message. The *imminent* expectation of the eschatological events, however, is not only inaccessible for us, it has become superfluous for all who come after him through Jesus' resurrection. The nearness of God, his salvation and his judgment, is eternally guaranteed by Jesus, since his imminent expectation has been fulfilled in him. Therefore, since Jesus, mankind has been freed from the question of when the end will come. Nevertheless, humanity still lives unto the end; Christians continue to pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Without this future expectation, Jesus' message and the meaning of his fate would not be understandable for us. Thus the imminent expectation constitutes the particular characteristic of Jesus' time, and because it has been fulfilled in him, it has become subsequently unnecessary.<sup>556</sup> In Jesus, then, lies the significance of the apocalyptic for us Christians.

Calvary, Trichur-680004

K. Luke

55. We do not wish to touch here upon the problem of Jesus' knowledge.

56. Cf. W. Pannenberg, *Jesus God and Man* (London, 1968) p. 243.

# 'Time' in the Teaching of Jesus

The early Christian faith and thinking start not from the spatial contrast between the 'Here' and the 'Beyond', but from the time distinction between 'Formerly', 'Now' and 'Then'. It does not, of course, mean that the spatial contrast between 'visible' and 'invisible' does not exist in early Christian thinking. There are, in the New Testament, invisible powers and authorities that are at work, while man observes only the visible deeds executed by the earthly agents of those powers<sup>1</sup>. But this invisible course of events is itself completely subjected to the progress of time. The essential thing is not the spatial contrast, but the distinction which faith makes between the times. Thus the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in his famous definition of faith names first of all the "assurance of things hoped for", that is, things which are future (Heb. 11:1). It is in connection with this that he gives the further definition, the "conviction of things not seen", which is a reference to the time process<sup>2</sup>. The New Testament Writings, in general, give to all revelation an essential anchorage in time, so that the 'time' in the New Testament has a central significance for salvation and faith. It is in this context that we are going to speak of 'time' in the Teaching of Jesus.

## The Biblical perspective in general

The Bible does not give an abstract philosophy of time as the universal measure of movement such as we find in Greek philosophy. The Hebrew and Greek words which are translated "time" indicate a point of time; and the point is identified by the event which is associated with it. The biblical conception of time is governed by the thought that 'time' is ordered by the succession of events which are expected in due time. This is

---

1. Note the reference to the invisible powers which are presupposed behind 'the rulers of this age' in 1 Cor 2:8 and 'authorities' in Rom 13:1.

2. Cf. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, London 1962, 37.

presented in a rigid scheme in Ec 4:1-8 which affirms a time for everything.

However, the characteristically biblical perspective of time is to be sought in its relation to eschatological Salvation and Judgement. The "times" are the course of events, all of which lead up to "the Time of Salvation and Judgement"<sup>3</sup>. Each step in the process of this 'Time' or 'Kairos' of Salvation is also a 'Time' or 'Kairos' in the sense that it is a critical time, a decisive moment which hastens or retards the Time of Salvation and Judgement. Here biblical Time seems in a way to coalesce into a single 'Time' for the salvation and the judgement of God are exhibited in each instant, and the responsibility of man to respond to this 'Time' never ceases. Hence it can be said that the present moment in biblical thought recapitulates the entire past, at the same time as it contains the entire future. This will explain why in many NT passages no distinction is made between the present time and eschatological Time.

### New Testament terminology

As regards the 'Time' concept, the NT terminology is characteristic. In decisive passages of the New Testament all the expressions for 'Time' that were available in the Greek language occur with special frequency. Thus we have words such as 'day' (hemera), 'hour' (hora), 'time' (kairos and chronos), 'age' aion), 'ages' (aiones), 'now' (nun) and 'today' (semeron) etc. Certainly these terms are sometimes used in the New Testament without any special theological reference. However, what interests us is the theological significance of these words, specially in the teaching of Jesus. Though there is a variety of words used to express the NT concept of 'Time', the idea that clearly elucidates the theological significance of 'time' in the Gospels is that which is expressed by 'kairos' (time)<sup>4</sup>. Therefore we will make our analysis of time in the teaching of Jesus based on the Gospel texts where the term 'kairos' occurs.

3. Cf. J. L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, 891.

4. For a lexicographical study of the term 'Kairos' Cf. G. Delling, "Kairos", TDNT III, 455-462.

### Kairos: the decisive salvific point

In the teaching of Jesus the 'kairos' refers, first of all, to a fateful and decisive point as regards salvation and judgement. Thus Jerusalem did not recognise the unique 'Time' (kairos) when Jesus came to save her: "... because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Lk 19:44). The term 'visitation' marks the fateful and decisive point of salvation and judgement. Luke begins his Gospel by declaring that God had visited and redeemed his people. And the long central section of his work (9:51-19:28) was designed to lead up to the day when Jerusalem would receive the royal visit of Jesus Christ. Now, he tells us, the day has come and Jerusalem is not ready for it. Yet the fact remains that God has visited his people either for salvation or for judgment. If Jerusalem will not have him as her saviour, she must have him as her judge<sup>5</sup>.

This presentation of 'Time' emphasizes also the fact that this 'Time' is ordained by God. It is not human deliberations but a divine decision that makes this or that date a 'Time', a point of time that has a special place in the execution of God's plan of salvation. In accordance with the NT concept of God, this 'Time' therefore is a gift of God manifesting the rich, incalculable and gracious goodness of God. At the same time, there is also emphasis on the judicial severity of its once-for-all demand. If Jerusalem did not recognise the unique 'Time' when Jesus came to save it, there can be no second chance<sup>6</sup>. The reproach which Jesus brings against the Jewish people is that they did not think it worth the trouble to try to discern the character of the 'Time' of religious decision implied in his messianic character: "You hypocrites: You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present 'time'?" (Lk 12:56).

### The time of the coming of Jesus

In the NT, this decisive 'Time' is identified with the time of the coming of Jesus. The Christ-event is the salvation event in

5. Cf. G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke*, London, 1963, 217.

6. Cf. G. Delling, art 'Kairos', *TDNT* III, 459.

which the 'Time' is fulfilled, the event which is demanded by the process of history. The coming of Jesus does not mean only his birth and his life in Palestine, but the whole salvific event that is realized in Christ.

According to Mk 1:15 the fact that this time is now present as God's gift in fulfilment of OT prophecy is the first starting declaration of the Gospel of Jesus: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel".

### Time of Christ: the mid-point of history

If the 'Time' of salvation and judgement is identified with the coming of Jesus Christ, he is to be reckoned as the centre of human History, which is essentially a redemptive history. The coming of Jesus is the mid-point of this redemptive history and hence the Time which is decisive for what precedes and what follows. Therefore we can say that all human history which is made up of the 'times' are Christ-centered<sup>7</sup>. The 'times' which are decisive for man as regards his salvation and judgement, whether before Christ or after Christ, become such in so far as they share in that 'Time' of Christ. This is illustrated in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen<sup>8</sup>. Here we have two references to the 'time' of the fruits<sup>9</sup>. The vineyard is the Kingdom of God, the gift offered by God to man in order to produce the fruits of salvation. It is concretely to be realized through Israel before Christ and the Church after Christ. The decisive rejection of this gift of the Kingdom and the consequent deprivation of the fruits of salvation depend on the attitude and behaviour of the husbandmen towards the Son, who is Christ, and who comes at the 'time' of the fruit. The servants who are sent become decisive in so far as they are representative of Christ as predecessor or followers. Whether before Christ or after Christ, the ultimate rejection of 'the Time of the coming of Jesus' is decisive for the deprivation of membership in the Kingdom of God: "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the

7. Cf. O. Cullmann, Christ and Time, London 1967, 121-130

8. Cf. Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12 and Lk 20:9-19.

9. Cf. Mt. 21:34 and 41.

vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their times" (Mt 21: 41)

### The time of Jesus

The earthly life of Jesus himself stands under the claim of the divine 'Time'. Jesus looks for this in individual decisions. In Jn. 7: 6-8, when Jesus was advised by his relatives to go to the feast in Jerusalem, he tells them: "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.... Go to the feast yourselves, I am not going upto this feast". In accordance with the strict sense of the divine 'Time' it seems that Jesus himself does not know it in advance. He discerns it as such only at the moment when it comes. He then decides in accordance with its divine claim.

In this respect Jesus differs from those who do not realize that they stand under the divine 'Time'. They think that they see a human 'Time' in all the opportunities which seem to be favourable for the realization of their own plans. In fact in Jn 7: 3-4 the relatives of Jesus see the 'Time' of Jesus at that feast of the Tabernacles because, according to them, it is a great opportunity for him to make himself known to the world. But this was according to their own calculations. Jesus, however, waits for his 'Time' and he allows the Father to show it to him. In this way he attains to genuine certainty.

### The 'time' of his glorification

When Jesus speaks of 'his Time' he refers more specifically to the time of his death and resurrection. In Mt 26: 17, while preparing for the last Supper, Jesus says: "My time is at hand". It is in the Fourth Gospel that this identification of Jesus' time with his death and resurrection is clearly expressed. The Fourth Gospel uses the word 'hour' as a synonym for 'time'. In fact, it is not exclusively Johannine. The Synoptics also use the term 'the hour' for the passion of Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane, according to Mk 14:35 Jesus prays to the Father that "if possible the hour might pass from him". In Mk 14:41<sup>10</sup> he tells the disciples that "the hour has come" because his betrayer has

10. Cf. also Mt. 26: 45.

arrived. However, in the Fourth Gospel 'the hour' of Jesus becomes a major theme.

### The hour of Jesus

John uses the word 'hour' 26 times and for him it designates a particular and significant period in Jesus' life. There are passages in Jn where he says that 'the hour' has not come or is coming<sup>11</sup> and other passages where he says that it has come<sup>12</sup>. Again we can distinguish between passages where 'hour' is used with the definite article or a possessive pronominal adjective (the hour, my hour, his hour) and passages where 'hour' has no article (an hour). The former instances clearly refer to a special period in Jesus' life, the period of his return to the Father (cf. 13:1). This return is accomplished in the passion, death and resurrection. The first time that Jesus says that the hour has come is after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12: 23). At that time the Sanhedrin had already decided to kill him. He had been anointed by Mary, which was an unconscious prophecy about his death<sup>13</sup>. The coming of the Gentiles indicates that the divine plan of salvation is going into effect. Since this salvation cannot be accomplished except through his death and resurrection, Jesus knows for certain that the hour is at hand. That the hour also includes the resurrection and ascension to the Father is seen in the fact that the glorification is put as the goal of the hour<sup>14</sup>.

### Hour that is 'coming' and 'come'

The passages speaking of 'hour' without the definite article seem to show that this 'hour' is related to 'the hour' of Jesus. It is the application of the effects of 'the hour of Jesus' that is taking place in the hour that is 'coming' and 'come'. This coming 'hour' is a time when there will be a change in the worship of God, namely, worship in Spirit and Truth will be realized, with both Jerusalem and Gerizim losing significance (Jn 4:21-23). It is a time when the spiritually dead will come to life through the

11. Cf. 2:4; 4:21,23; 5:25, 28-29, 7:30; 8:20; 16:2,25,32

12. Cf. 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1.

13. Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I-XIII* N. Y. 1966, 454.

14. Cf. 12:23 and 17:1.

Word, which will ultimately flower into the resurrection of the body (Jn 5:23-29). This time will, however, involve persecution (Jn 16:2). But it is also a time of the Paraclete, who will remain in us as a helper to understand clearly the words of Jesus (Jn 16:25). Evidently the reference is to the period after the glorification of Jesus. However, it is not to be understood in a purely chronological manner, because this period is anticipated in those who believe in Jesus. This is indicated by the reference in the same contexts that this 'hour' "is now here" or "has already come"<sup>15</sup>. The risen Jesus acted in continuity with what he had already begun during his ministry. And so during the ministry the effects of the hour may be said both 'to be coming' and 'to be already here'.

### The time of the destruction of evil

The time of the glorification of Jesus is also the time of the destruction of evil. In Mt 8:29 where the two demoniacs of the country of the Gadarenes cried out to Jesus: "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" The 'time' here is the appointed time for the eschatological consummation, when God will destroy every hostile power (1 Cor 15:24-25)<sup>16</sup>. But this eschatological destruction of evil is anticipated already in the coming of Jesus. Therefore the 'time of Jesus' is also the time of the destruction of evil.

This is specially true of the time of the glorification of Jesus. In Jn 12:31 Jesus speaking of the hour of his glorification says: "Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out". The hour that brings glory to Jesus brings condemnatory judgement to the prince of this world, but life to those who are drawn by Jesus: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). The prince of this world is a Johannean term for Satan<sup>17</sup>. The glorification of Jesus has resulted in

15. Cf. Jn. 4:23 and 5:25.

16. Cf. J. L. McKenzie, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, in *JBC*, 78.

17. Cf. Jn 14:30; 16:31.

the Satan's loss of authority over the world. However the victorious hour of Jesus constitutes a victory over the power of the evil one only in principle. The working out of this victory in time and place is the gradual work of the believing Christians. Even in the Christian life there is a tension between a victory already won (1 Jn 2 : 13) and a victory still to be won (1 Jn 5:4-5).

### **The Time of the second coming of Jesus**

The 'Time' is applied to the second coming of Jesus in the Synoptics. Mk 13 : 33 says: "Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time will come". Here we have an exhortation introducing the parable of the absent householder (vv. 34-36). The hearers are to be vigilant, because they do not know when the 'time' is. In its reference to the time', the exhortation echoes the ideas of v. 32 "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father". Underlying this statement is the OT imagery of the Day of Yahweh<sup>18</sup>. That it is known only to God is also an OT conviction (Zach 14 : 7). Mk 13 is the eschatological discourse and in this respect the vigilance is to be understood in the eschatological sense and, therefore, the times as referring to the eschatological coming of Jesus.

### **The Time demanding constant vigilance**

However, as can be readily seen, the eschatological discourse is not wholly concerned with the 'eschaton' (end). The validity of the hortatory sayings and parables bearing upon vigilance is perennial. Therefore the exhortation is to Christian vigilance par excellence, which is true for all ages. The words in v. 37 "And what I say to you I say to all: Watch" lift the whole discourse beyond the limits of the narrow perspective of the crisis that the coming destruction of Jerusalem and its temple would mean to the Jews and to Jewish Christians. It places the whole discourse also in a wider perspective than the purely futuristic eschatological sense. The 'time' of the second coming of Jesus is a constant reality in the life of a Christian. Therefore the vigilance is to be constant in Christian life. This is expressed in Lk 21 : 36 : "Watch at all times, praying that you may have strength... to stand before the Son of Man." Everyone will eventually take part in the Parousia. How a person lives now, determines how he will stand before the Son of Man<sup>19</sup>.

18. Am 5 : 18-20; Is 2:12; Jer 46 : 10.

19. Cf. C. Stuhlmuller, The Gospel according to Luke, in JBC, 155.

### Christian recognises the signs of the times

In Mt 16:3 Jesus reproaches the Pharisees and Sadducees for not being able to interpret the signs of the times: "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times". Here the word 'kairos' is used in the plural thus referring to the 'time' as occurring to each one confronting the Kingdom of God. Since the realization of the Kingdom of God is strictly connected with present fulfilment, the demand of the 'Time' recurs with each moment of the Christian life. The Christian is somehow in possession of this 'Time'. As one who lives by the Spirit, he is able always to recognize it and concretely fulfil its demand. He should be able to recognize the signs of the times being alert as St. Paul says, "to every opportunity...to do good to all men..." (Gal 6:10).

### Conclusion

The above analysis shows that 'Time' in the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels has a central significance for salvation and faith. The times are the course of events all of which lead up to 'the Time' of salvation and judgement. This is identified with the time of the coming of Jesus which is the mid-point of redemptive history.

Jesus' earthly life itself stands under the claim of the divine 'Time'. He always waited for his 'Time' to be shown to him by his Father, which was especially true of the Time of his glorification. This helped him to confront all the situations in his life with certainty and strength.

The 'Time' of salvation or of the Kingdom of God is also the time of the destruction of evil, which is, however, to be worked out in each individual gradually. This involves constant vigilance in the life of the Christians who are called upon to recognise the signs of the times and to react positively to them.

# Time and its Fulness in the Pauline Corpus

It would not be an exaggeration to say that St. Paul is the most articulate interpreter of the Christian faith in the first century A. D. Incidentally, the first written documents of the New Testament period are the Epistles and not the Gospels; and the letters of Paul certainly rank among the earliest of the existing canonical books of the apostolic age. This being so, the first extant written witness of the thought of apostolic times stems from Paul's masterly pen. Any point of Pauline theology would consequently be New Testament theology. This does not imply that all New Testament theology, faith, proclamation and practice are embodied in Paul's letters. The Apostle of the Gentiles was not, and did not pretend to be, a systematic theologian. All his letters were written and sent to the local churches according as circumstances and occasions offered themselves. Nevertheless, it would be true to insist that Paul was, and still is, one of the greatest and clearest exponents of the Christian message in the first years of Christianity.

In this article Paul's theology will be examined in regard to time and its fulness. What is the concept of time in his writings? What is the angle from which he looks at it? To answer these questions, we shall look into some of the texts of the Pauline *corpus*, under which tradition has included fourteen letters. Modern New Testament scholarship, however, has unanimously denied the Pauline authorship of the letter to the Hebrews. Many scholars regard the Pastoral Epistles as post-Pauline in origin; and there is a difference of opinion as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians. But our study will embrace both the unmistakably Pauline and the Deutero-Pauline letters.

## Paul's Hebrew background

Biblical history is revelatory history. The Old Testament writings recount from the outset Yahweh's self-revelation. God

took the initiative in revealing himself and manifesting his salvific plan for the world and for the human race both in creation and in history. After man's fall he chose a particular race, the descendants of Abraham. The Bible is unequivocal in its affirmation that he carried out his plan within the framework of time. The concept of God revealing himself and visiting his people invades both the circular and horizontal times. The chosen race was never without a serious commitment to a particular concept of time, namely, it believed in history's rhythmically forward direction and in an openness to the penetrating activity of God. History is teleological. The Hebrews, of course, did not so much reflect on time as such, except, perhaps the sage Qoheleth who did a bit of speculation on time and found a mystery about it and thereby expressed his own sense of futility.

The Hebrew concept of time generally differed from that of Greek philosophy, which conceived of time cyclically. Here the thought about time was very largely determined by the physico-cosmological approach.<sup>1</sup> The Jews, on the contrary, conceived time as a steadily forward-moving motion. There was a beginning: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (Gen. 1 : 1); and there will be also an end. Time is an ever-rolling stream, a straight line that goes on and on. The present age involves a period of time with a definite end. and the age to come is to be endless (Is. 9 : 6). Thus, the Hebrews understood their history as something different from a haphazard conglomeration of events, from a meaningful cyclical or from an ultimately meaningless recurrence of better and worse events.<sup>2</sup> History is meaningful and makes sense because it moves to a teleological point, to an omega.

St. Paul, who studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22 : 3), inherited this Hebrew concept of history and time as a horizontal movement which can lead into the indefinite past and future. After his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, he looked at the divine salvific plan under the new light, the irre-

1. Cf. G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, IX, p. 585

2. M. Barth, *Ephesians* (The Anchor Bible, New York, 1974) p. 128.

sistible light of Christ. He realized how God's salvific plan moved relentlessly towards its fulfilment in the Christ-event and has already reached its fulness in the redemptive work of Christ. Here lies the specifically Christian and therefore Pauline concept of time, namely, the orientation of all events from this new, decisive incision.<sup>3</sup>

Before, however, we form a synthesis of Paul's theology of God's design in time, it may be good to dwell briefly on the terminology of time in his writings. The speculative aspect of time, does not concern us; i. e., our primary concern is not with the question of time as such but of time as the framework in which God's salvific plan realizes and moves towards its omega-

### Terminology<sup>4</sup>

Among the terms denoting time in the Pauline *corpus*, the word *kairos* is the most frequent and particularly important. *Kairos* primarily denotes due measure, due proportion.<sup>5</sup> It sometimes means opportunity, as in Gal. 6:10, where there is the question of the opportunity for doing good to all (cf. Eph. 5:16). Otherwise *kairos* has a temporal meaning and signifies either the right, proper, favourable time, or definite, fixed time.<sup>6</sup> As in the Septuagint, Paul employs *kairos* in this sense. It is accordingly used to express a shorter time, as in 1 Cor. 7:5, or a longer time (cf. Acts 17:26). In the actual use of the word, one can distinguish a secular from a Christian sense, according as to whether the choice of point in time lies within the discretion of man or whether the *kairos* is determined by God.<sup>7</sup> St. Paul does at times employ the word in its secular sense, as 1 Cor. 7:5, namely, the time decided by the married persons themselves to

3. Cf. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (London, 1971) p. xxvi.

4. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-50 (detailed study).

5. Cf. W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of the New Testament world* (London, 1975) p. 138.

6. Cf. W. F. Arndt-F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, 1959) p. 395.

7. Cf. "Time," "The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible" IV (Nashville, 1962) p. 645.

abstain from marital relations. Generally, however, in St. Paul, as also in the other New Testament writings, *kairos* is not determined by human will but by divine decision. It is God who fixes the *kairos*, a period of time or even a point of time in the execution of his salvific designs, which can be either in the past (Eph. 2:12), or in the future (1 Tim. 4:1. 2 Tim. 4:3), or in the present. This last *nuance* is clear in Rom. 3:26 where Paul writes: *en to nun kairo*, by which he refers to the present time fixed by the Father to manifest his righteousness through a reparation worthy of him by the effusion of Christ's blood (cf. too Rom. 8:18. 11:5. 13:11. 2 Cor 6:2. 8:14)

Because the realization of the divine plan of salvation is bound to *kairoi*, or fixed points of time ordained by God, there is salvation history. In other words, not all fragments of the universal history constitute salvific history, or special forms of divine activity. Rather, there are a number of particular times which stand out from the course of secular events singled out by God from time as a whole, and these are small temporal units with clearly defined boundaries, whose contents are unique. Precisely these temporal units are called *kairoi* in the Pauline letters.

Every possibility and task in history has its own *idios kairos*, "appropriate *kairos*" (Gal. 6:9. 2 Thes. 2:6. 1 Tim 2:6. 6:15. Tit. 1:3).<sup>8</sup> The series of these *kairoi* cannot be known or calculated beforehand by man. Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the sudden inbreaking of these times (1 Thes. 5:1 f.). Thus *kairos* considers time in its individual periods and moments given by God and ruled by him.

Finally *kairos* is also used as one of the eschatological terms for the *parousia* and the last judgment (1 Cor. 7:29. Rom. 13:11). We know that for Paul, as well as for the first Christians, the thought of the *parousia* coloured the whole of Christian life. Both the Synoptics and the Apocalypse of John refer to the eschatological drama as *kairos* (Lk. 19:44. 21:8. Rev. 1:3). The Pastoral Epistles make mention of these *kairoi* which refer to the still future stages of redemptive history (1 Tim. 6:14-15).

---

8. E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* (New York, 1959) pp. 76 f.

Besides *kairos*, Paul uses other words like *hōra*, "hour," and *hēmera*, "day," which also indicate the special points of time at which the self-revealing God manifests his plan. *Hēmera* is used in the Septuagint to designate the beginning of the eschatological drama which still lies in the future. Paul took over this concept of the "day of the Lord" from Judaism and saw in the advent of Christ the arrival of "the Day."

*Nun* also belongs to this group, and stresses the fact that the period after the resurrection belongs in an eminent way to salvation history and is consequently distinguished from all other times (Col. 1:6. Rom. 16:25. Eph. 3:5).

Another group of words is also adduced by the Apostle to denote time, but these bear a different slant of meaning. In this group comes *chronos* which, outside philosophical discussions, can mean time in general; time in its course. *Chronos* means mostly a space of time. For example, *eph'hoson* (Rom. 7:1. 1 Cor. 7:36. 4 Gal. 4:1 etc.) stands for a space of time. This space of time may be undetermined, as in 1 Cor. 16:7, or may be fixed as in Acts 8:11. When the plural *chronoi* is used, the reference may be to larger segments of time, the whole pre Christian age, as in Rom. 16:25 in contrast to the *ta nun*, "the now," of Rom. 3:26, and to the fulness of *chronos* in Gal. 4:4 (discussed below). In the pastorals we find this term used with concrete reference to salvation history (2 Tim. 1:9. Tit. 1:2). It may have the meaning "season" or "age", or it may signify simply some space of time to elapse.

Broadly speaking, *chronos* expresses the duration of a period, whereas *kairos* stresses it as marked by certain features (1 Thes. 5:1. Acts 1:7). Sometimes the distinction between the two words is not sharply defined as, for example, in 2 Tim. 4:6.

*Aiōn* is another frequently occurring word in the Pauline *corpus* which, both in the singular and the plural, focuses upon the extension of time and expresses duration. In fact, *aiōn* designates both an exactly defined period of time and an undefined and incalculable duration. Paul distinguishes two aeons with a radical contrast between them. One of them is characterized as evil (Gal. 1:4).

In the brief analysis of the terminology of time in the Pauline *corpus* it appears that, according to primitive Christian conceptions, time is linear. The rectilinear presentation of time can be considered as the framework for the New Testament history of salvation. Along this line, a salvation history takes place. Both the *chronoi* and the *kairos* are completely under God's power and ruled by him. In other words, it is God who fixes the individual providential points and seasons of salvation history. All his activity is so inevitably bound up with time that it is the natural pre-supposition of all that God causes to occur.

### Pleroma tou chronou / ton kairon

Thus salvation in the New Testament and in the writings of Paul follows the Jewish pattern as outlined and developed in the Old Testament writings. The unique character of the Christian conception of time, however, should not be missed. In the Pauline writings salvation is portrayed as a continuous time process, which embraces past, present and future. Moreover, it is characteristic of this estimate of time as the scene of redemption history that all points are related to one historical fact, the Christ-event which embraces the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. This event, for Paul, is the central or the mid-point of salvific history, which, indeed, it is. The Apostle looks at biblical history from this vantage point. He casts his glance backward and forward and recognizes a marvellous design of God. All that preceded the Christ-event, namely, the times of the patriarchs, the exodus, the Sinai legislation, the conquest of the Promised Land, the kings, the Exile, etc., was a preparation for this unique event, and all that follows is the final blossoming and realization of the event. Consequently, the Apostle judges the different stages of salvation, namely, the age before creation in which the revelatory process was already in preparation in the divine predestination, and the present age which lies between creation and the end, and the coming age in which the eschatological drama falls, from the mid-point of the Christ-event. He contemplates this ineffable plan of God and calls it *mystērion* (1 Cor. 2:7. Eph. 1:9. 2:7. 3:21 etc.). By *mystērion* he understands a fact, an event once hidden but now revealed in Jesus Christ through the redemptive act of his death and resurrection. In fact, Christ's coming stands in the

middle of the predestined plan of history, the mystery, the wisdom, the dispensation of God. God established this plan before all ages (Eph. 1:9, 3:9). In the former ages he had only revealed it to his prophets piecemeal (Rom. 16:25, Tit. 1:2f.). God had set a time for the full revelation of his mystery in Christ. The Pauline *corpus* refers to this historic revelation by the expressions *plérōma tou chronou* (Gal. 4:4) and *plérōma tōn kairōn* (Eph. 1:10) respectively. In taking upon himself human nature, Christ brought to light the mystery hidden from all ages.

### Galatians 4:4

"But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4f.).

Some would interpret these words from within the course of human events in the then Roman and Greek world and culture<sup>9</sup>. But it may be legitimately questioned how much of these advantages were in the Apostle's mind when he wrote this statement. The context shows that his thought is centred on servitude to the law, and therefore v. 4 would regard the *plérōma* as the limit of God's testing time under the law. Until the advent of Christ all men, Jews and Gentiles, had been enslaved to the elemental spirits of the universe" (v 3), in so far as their relationship with God had been conditioned by them almost exclusively. Now, God's appointed time, *prothesmia* (v. 2), has set in, and this has shattered the slavery under which the world was held captive. In Christ the Son a new relationship to God has been revealed, that of a child towards its father. Thus *plérōma tou chronou* is to be unequivocally understood as signifying the moment in which the long extension of time (*chronos*) had reached its full measure. It is the climax of the long preparation enveloping the whole course of history.<sup>10</sup>

Even the use of the definite article *tou* (genitive) seems to

9. Cf. D. Guthrie, *Galatians*, (London, 1900) p. 113.

10. Cf. H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (Exegetisch-kritischer Kommentar über das NT. 11th ed., Göttingen, 1951) p. 137.

be on purpose. For Paul *the chronos* is a very specific time, long anticipated in the providence and plan of God, and the fulness is the complete fulness. All things were set on the stage for the appearance of the Son of God. It is God's own moment for the handing over of his Son to redeem the world, "to purchase freedom for the subjects of the law, in order that we might attain the status of sons".<sup>11</sup>

Paul harps on the rôle of God in bringing about the fulness of time. He is not just saying that a divinely determined space of time has run its course, or a divinely ordained point has been reached automatically, as the Jews seem to have understood it.<sup>12</sup> He is carrying the concept of the fulfilment of time beyond the Jewish view. His view has certainly nothing to do with evolutionary ideas. He never considers time as a neutral ground on which anything and everything might happen. No time "works itself out".<sup>13</sup> Rather, God has in his power the time and all the aeons. He has set a dimension to it as to everything else in the world, and he will bring this measure, this dimension to its *pleroma*, to its fulfilment, to its completion.<sup>14</sup>

The specific character of early Christian theology, and therefore of St. Paul, is that the *plérōme tou chronou* is brought about by God the Father sending his Son, Jesus Christ, whose work is finally accomplished in the Spirit. Thus the Trinitarian structure of Gal. 4: 4-6 is clear. The solemn expression in v. 4 indicates the close of one period - the period of preparation -, and the inbreaking of the new period - the period of the future aeon -, which the Jews had pushed to the end of time, but which Paul sees begun in the appearance of Jesus Christ, born of a

11. Cf. *The Interpreter's Bible* X (Nashville, 1960) p. 524.

12. H. Strack and P. Billerbeck observe: "to *plérōme tou chronou* ist der Augenblick, der die von Gott festgesetzte Zeit vollmach" (*Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* III [Munich, 1926] p. 570).

13. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

14. Compare the remark of Luther: "Non enim tempus fecit filium mitti, sed e contra missio filii fecit tempus plenitudinis" (cited by H. Conzelmann, *Grundriss der Theologie des Neuen Testaments* [Munich, 1968] p. 188).

woman, born under the law.<sup>15</sup> Jesus Christ has appeared once for all at the climax of history to abolish sin by the sacrifice of himself. The appearance of the Son of God is based, of course, on the act of divine mission. It consists in the incarnation of the pre-existent Son of God in the fulness of time (Rom. 1: 3f. 8: 3. 29. 32. 1 Cor. 8: 6. 2 Cor. 8: 9. Phil. 2: 6 ff. Col. 1: 13 ff. Jn. 1: 1-18).

### Ephesians 1: 10

The Pauline theology of the fulness of time in Galatians is corroborated by another text, namely, Eph. 1: 10. "For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1: 9f.).

Unlike in Galatians, the author writes *plērōma tōn kairōn*. *Kairōs*, as has been pointed out earlier, does not of itself signify succession of time, but a fixed, definite period in relation to its deciding character. However, the plural *kairoi*, in the text, would refer to a series of definite periods succeeding one another and culminating in their fulness, so that, in the final analysis, the formulations in Galatians and Ephesians would be identical in meaning and intent.<sup>16</sup> In point of fact, both the expressions have as their background the idea of consecutive periods of history which are to be crowned and completed by an era surpassing all previous periods.

In Eph. 1: 4ff. the writer describes the mystery of God's salvific plan. God is the Lord over the ages (1 Tim. 1: 17). As Lord of all ages, he has everything in his hand and he can ordain everything as he wishes. The election of the believer, his predestination, is a manifestation of divine Lordship, because this election goes back to a decision made long ago by God (Rom. 8: 28f. 2 Thes. 2: 3). The word *exelexato*, "chose," in Eph. 1: 4 emphasizes the entirely gratuitous character of God's relationship

15. Cf. M. Zerwick, *Der Brief an die Galater* (Düsseldorf, 1964) p. 75.

16. Schlier, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

with the believers. This choice is made through Christ in accordance with the eternal plan. God works out his eternal salvific plan in time in the historical event of Christ, especially through the blood of Jesus shed on the Cross. By the sacrificial death of Jesus, a new aeon has begun, in which a new relationship with God is established.

Paul speaks of this divine plan as a great mystery, not in the way the mystery religions teach; rather as a mystery revealed to the believing community. The ultimate purpose of God's designs is the unity and perfection of the whole world and restoration of the primitive condition. Incidentally both the Old Testament (cf. Is. 11) and the New Testament (cf. Rev. 22) express their belief that the end-time will fully restore the primeval conditions of paradise. Not only does the New Testament but also the apocalyptic and Qumran literature take up this theme already taught by the prophets like Amos, Hosea and Joel who spoke of "that day" or of "those days", "in which God would prove that true to the promises made to his Chosen People. The rabbis too followed this eschatological tradition. The present, old, evil aeon was to give way to the coming era.<sup>17</sup> When the author of Ephesians therefore speaks of the *plēroma ton kairōn* he alludes to a notion widespread, though not universally accepted, among the Jews of his time. But he sees the irruption of the new aeon in the redemptive work of Christ and in the revelation of the mystery by which God brings everything together under Christ as head. In the *plēroma tōn kairōn* Christ is the principle of fulfilment, and purpose of all things. He sums up all things in himself and thus foreshadows their final union and consummation. In Christ the fulness of time has been reached; the foundation of the new order has been laid. Christ alone now "administers" the final days. He works them out. He is depicted as the one who was to make them dawn (Eph. 5: 14). He shapes, fills, uses, masters, extends, and concludes them. The days of fulfilment are Christ's time, however "evil" some of the present days are (Eph. 5: 17. 6: 13).<sup>18</sup>

17. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 128f.

18. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

### Conclusion

According to God's plan, the *plérōma* of time, the pivotal event of human history, is the incarnation of the Son of God, culminating in Jesus' redeeming death and resurrection (Phil. 2: 6ff.). The Old Testament looked forward to this focal point of human history, to this *plérōma* of time, the coming of the Messiah, to which we who live in the New Dispensation look back with joy and gratitude. In spite of the hope and confidence in the fact that we are a saved people, we look forward to the great day of the Lord's triumph in its final stage: to the culmination of his victory. We can march forward in confidence because our hope is founded upon a fact of the present, which follows from the former redemptive act of Christ who is risen and who is present in and among us. In us who believe in the risen Christ the resurrection-power is already at work, and cannot be lost even to the end of time. It is in the end-time, for us believers also, that redemptive history finds its specifically future completion, its *plérōma*, when "God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give new life to your mortal bodies through his indwelling Spirit" (Rom. 8: 11).<sup>19</sup>

Shanti Ashram  
Gandhipuram  
Coimbatore-641012.

M. Lucas

---

19. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

# Time in the Indo-Iranian Tradition

The common term for time in Sanskrit is *kāla*,<sup>1</sup> and the one in Avestan<sup>2</sup> is *zrvan*, but there are several other words which in some way or other denote time in its general or specific aspects.<sup>3</sup> From the historical point of view, however, these do not have the significance the two nouns just mentioned had in the evolution of ancient Aryan thought. As a matter of fact, in India as well as in Iran the nature and meaning of time had been the object of intense speculation, records of which are preserved by the sources at our disposal. It is the purpose of this contribution to study the etymology and meaning of our terms, and to offer a brief account of ancient Indo-Iranian thought regarding time.

## I

We take it for granted that *kāla* is of IE origin, so that all Dravidian etymologies will *ipso facto* remain excluded. Dr. Hermann Gundert, the great Malayalam scholar, in the last century put forward the suggestion that our term was a derivative

1. A succinct account of the various etymologies proposed and list of meanings in M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* I (Indogermanische Bibliothek. II: Wörterbücher, Heidelberg, 1956) pp. 202f. A. Thumb- R. Hauschild, *Handbuch des Sanskrit* II (Indogermanische Bibliothek. I: Lehr- und Handbücher, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, 1953) p. 202. Cf. too C. D. Buck, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages* (2nd impr., Chicago, 1965) pp. 953-55.

2. That is, the language of the Zoroastrian scriptures, generally known by the name Avesta.

3. Cf. Luke, "Indo-Iranian Terms Denoting Time," *Journal of Dharma* 1 (1976) pp. 363-77; on the word "time," cf. *ibid.*, p. 363, n. 2.

of *kāl-*, “leg!”<sup>4</sup> Leaving aside the semantic problem involved here, we say that this derivation is based upon mere external resemblance, and is nothing more than an ingenious guess made at a time when comparative philology was still in its infancy. There is also, in Sanskrit, the homonym *kāla-*, “black,” which is a Dravidian loan word,<sup>5</sup> and therefore has nothing to do with the term under study. Even when it is conceded that *kāla-*, “time,” is of IE origin, the fact remains that its etymology is far from clear, and hence several theories have been put forward by specialists.

The word has been connected with Latin *kalendae*, “calends”,<sup>6</sup> Greek *kēr*, “doom, fate,”<sup>7</sup> and *kairos*, “point of time,”<sup>8</sup> Hittite *ak'(k)-/ek(k)-*, “to die,”<sup>9</sup> Gothic *hweila*, “time,”<sup>10</sup> and finally Sanskrit *kal-* (cf. the finite form *kalyati*), “to compel, impel, carry, bear.”<sup>11</sup> All these correspondences are merely

4. He put forward this suggestion in one of the first issues of the Journal of the German Oriental Society (= *Zeitchrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*; reference in Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, p. 202).

5. Cf. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language* (The Great Languages, 2nd ed., London, 1965) p. 381; cf. too T. Burrow-M. B. Emeneau, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* (Oxford, 1961) No 1253 (p. 105).

6. From the verbal root *calāre*, “to call out, call out,” etc., a root which is etymologically related to Sanskrit *kala-* in *usā-kala-*, *kalādhika-* and *kalāvika-*, “cock.”

7. Connected with Sanskrit *śṛṇāti*, *śīryate*, “to break, smash,” Tocharian *karyap* (A), *karep* (B), “injury,” etc.

8. On the term, cf. H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch I* (Indogermanische Bibliothek. II: Wörterbcher, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, 1973) pp. 755f.

9. This base serves as the passive stem of *kuen-*, “to smite, kill,” which is itself a formation from IE *gwhen-*, surviving in Sanskrit *han-*, “to kill,” Greek *thetno*, etc.

10. Cf. Old High German *hwila*, and Old English *hwil*, all going back to IE *qwō(i)lo-*; this etymology has been accepted by several scholars.

11. This etymology is cited with approval by Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 955.

apparent, for, when examined in the light of historical linguistics, they will be seen to be devoid of scientific foundation. There now remain two more proposals which deserve to be taken seriously and which, therefore, shall be examined here in some detail.

Jakob Wackernagel, the great grammarian, thought, that *kāla-* was a derivative of the Sanskrit root *kar-* which could, according to norms of vowel gradation, yield *kāra-*, and this latter could give rise to *kāla-*.<sup>12</sup> The common base *kar* (*karoti*) goes back to IE (*s)kwer-*,<sup>13</sup> "to do, make, form," and the formation *kāra-*, which represents the *vṛddhi* grade, has the meanings "making, doing, working, action, deed, bringing into being"; from this rich variety of meanings there evolved the sense "decision, success, victory," and finally, "the decisive point of time, time in general."

The non-specialist may wonder how *r* can become *l*, but for the historian and grammarian this is not a problem at all. We know that among the Indo-Aryans there was some sort of oscillation in the treatment of *l/r*,<sup>14</sup> one that must be explained as the outcome of dialectal variation among the Aryan groups. To put the matter briefly,<sup>15</sup> there are in Sanskrit words that attest to both *l* and *r*; for example,

IE <i>leip-</i>	: Skt. <i>limpati, rimpati</i>
IE <i>k'leu-</i>	; Skt. <i>śravati, śloka-</i> <sup>16</sup>
IE <i>pleu-</i>	: Skt. <i>plavate, pravate</i>

The lack of consistency in the treatment of *l/r* (*r/l*) persist in the Prakrits as well.<sup>17</sup> A myth in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa

12. Cf. J. Wackernagel- A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II/2 (Göttingen, 1954) § 20c (p. 64).

13. For details, cf. J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* I (Bern, 1957) pp. 641f.

14. References to the relevant literature dealing with this problem are found in Luke, *op. cit.*, p. 367, n. 22.

15. Details in Luke, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

16. Cf. Burrow, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

17. Discussions in J. Bloch, *Indo-Aryan from the Vedas to Modern Times* (Paris, 1965) pp. 74-77.

narrates how the asuras who had been deprived of articulate speech once exclaimed, *helávo*, *heláv(o)* or *hailo*, *hail(o)*, according to another tradition (III: 2: 1: 23). This mysterious utterance is nothing but a dialectal variant of the address *he'ryah*, "O Arya!" Furthermore, the inscriptions of Asoka at times substitute *l* for *r*: *lāgā-* (= *rāgā*), *cila-* (= *cira-*), *gālava-* (= *gārava*), (*vihātaya-*) (= *vihāra-*), etc.<sup>18</sup> At times the tendency to dissimilation has been the reason for the origin of *l*; compare *ludda-* (= *raudra*), *haladda-* (= *haridra-*), *dalidda-* (= *daridra-*), etc. In conclusion, the development of *kāta-* as a dialectal variant of *kāra-* is quite in accordance with the norms of Indo-Aryan phonology.

What should we think about this theory? Purely from the philological point of view it is quite possible, but semantically considered it is not so easy to see how a base meaning "making, doing, working," and so on could so easily acquire the nuance "decisive moment of time, time as such." We would, therefore, do better if we look for another derivation that will not present any such difficulty.

It is possible to obtain *kāla-* from the base *kwel-*,<sup>19</sup> a base which survives in Greek *teleo* and *pelo* (*pelomai*). The change of IE *kw-* to *t-* and *p-* respectively in Greek is quite well known.<sup>20</sup> It need not be discussed here. The verb *pelo* is Homeric,<sup>21</sup> and literally means "to turn"; the derivative nuances include "to turn out to be, become, come into being," and finally, "to be." In the Homeric epics *teleo* is much more frequent,<sup>22</sup> and with reference to time, what is of moment is the meaning "to come round in the course, bring on, come round, pass, happen," etc; compare *ēmata poll'ōtelestē* (t: 153 = o: 143), "many days had come round". Needles to say, the understanding of *kāla-* as the derivative of a root whose basic sense is "to turn round, come round, rotate," is quite satisfactory.

18. Cf. Bloch, *Les inscriptions d'Asoka* (Collection Emile Sénart, Paris, 1950) pp. 46 f.

19. Pokorny, *op. cit.*, pp. 639 f.

20. References to sources in Luke, *op. cit.*, p. 369, n. 26.

21. List of passages in R. J. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* (repr., Norman, Okl., 1963) p. 321.

22. Cf. Cunliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

The word *kāla-* is very old, occurring, though but once, in the first Veda (10: 42: 9), and in the age of Pāṇini it was the term *par excellence* denoting time.<sup>23</sup> From antiquity onwards *kāla-* came to be interpreted as the destroyer of everything. Thus there accrued to it the meanings "time of death, death." It was even endowed with the attributes of Yama, and was finally identified with him. Accordingly it is often connected with the expressions *antaka-* and *mṛtyu-*,<sup>24</sup> and when used together with the verbs *eti* and *karoti*,<sup>25</sup> it means to die." Here belongs too a philosophico-mythical conception of time which has been fully developed by Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism, to wit, *kāla-cakra-*, "the wheel of time,"<sup>26</sup> a conception which has also its parallels in the traditions of Greece and Rome.<sup>27</sup> Jainism, for example, teaches that this wheel has twelve parts, six marking an upward evolution and the remaining six a downward devolution; *kāla-* thus becomes *utsarpīṇi* and *avasarpīṇi*! Time is, then, a snake that keeps on coiling upwards and downwards. The wheel of time means the perpetuation of the cycle of births and rebirths, so that time itself turns out to be a noose! It is the principle of *samsāra-*,<sup>28</sup> the great knot that keeps men in bondage.

23. Cf. the index in O. Böhlingk, *Pāṇini's Grammatik* (repr., Hildesheim, 1964).

24. The first word is etymologically related to German *Ende*, English *end*, etc.; *-ka-* is an agent suffix, and *antaka-* is therefore the one who brings about the *anta-*, "end" (= death). As the factor that leads to death which is certain but beyond man's control, to events whose causes elude man's grasp, time means also fate, destiny, etc. On this point, cf. I. Scheftelowitz, *Die Zeit als Schicksalgottheit in der indischen und iranischen Religion* (Stuttgart, 1929).

25. The verb *eti*, from the IE base *ei-*, "to go," is related to Latin *eō*, Greek *eīmi*, etc., which too convey the idea of fate.

26. Let it be recalled here that Sanskrit *cakra-* is etymologically related to Greek *kuklos* (whence Latin *cylclus*, English *cycle*, etc.) and Anglo-Saxon *wheel*: all of them go back to the IE form *qweqwlos*!

27. Cf. Luke, *op. cit.*, p. 370, n. 33.

28. Penetrating discussions in A. M. Boyer, "Etudes sur l'origine de la doctrine du *samsāra*," *Journal Asiatique* série 9, 18 (1901) pp. 451-99; brief account in Luke, "The Ideal of Poverty in the Religious Traditions of India," *Jeevadharma* 4 (1974) pp. 369-72.

The ideas outlined here represent late developments which are sufficiently well known, and as such need not be discussed. We shall therefore focus our attention on the earlier speculations regarding time which survive in the Atharvaveda and the Maitri Upaniṣad. An exhaustive study of these two sources cannot be attempted here, for the obvious reason that the topic is too vast.

The 19th book of the fourth Veda embodies two hymns in praise of time, namely, nos. 53-54,<sup>29</sup> which, according to the unanimous verdict of specialists, originally formed a single poem. Unlike the vast majority of the poems in the Atharvaveda, it has nothing to do with cult, ritual, magic, etc. but is philosophical in character, dealing professedly with cosmogony, and is generally known as *kālasūkta*-; one may very well put it on a par with the *puruṣasūkta*- of the first Veda (10;90). We add here the more important stanzas of the *kāla*- hymn in the prose translation of Whitney along with succinct comments on the expressions that are significant for the historian of Indian thought:

“Time drives (as) a horse with seven reins, thousand-eyed, unageing, possessing much seed; him the inspired poets mount; his wheels are all beings” (53:1). In the background of this stanza there stands the poet’s conviction that time is identical with the sun, and hence he has no difficulty in predicating of it the latter’s attributes and qualities; compare the following passage from another hymn of the fourth Veda, “The ruddy one became time” (13:2:39). The Maitri Upanisad explicitly calls the sun the matrix of time: *suryo yonih kālasya* (6:14):

“Seven wheels doth this time drive; seven (are) his naves, immortality<sup>30</sup> forsooth (his) axle; he, time, including (?) all these

29. For comments, cf. N. W. Brown, “Time is a Noose. *Man in the Universe. Some Continuities in Indian Thought* (Ind. ed., Calcutta, 1966) pp. 68-87 (cf. pp. 71-73). M. Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda* (The Sacred Books of the East 42, 2nd Ind. repr., Delhi, 1967) pp. 224 f., 681-88. W. D. Whitney, *Atharva-Veda-Samhitā* (The Harvard Oriental Series 8, Ind. 2nd Ind. repr., Delhi, 1971) pp. 987-91.

30. In the original *amṛta*-, which can mean both “not dead, not subject to death,” and “life-giving” (cf. P. Thieme, *Studien*

beings, goes on as the first god" (53 : 2). The apotheosis of time is beyond doubt in the final line of the present stanza: *kāla-* is "the first god", i. e., the primordial god who is the source of origin of everything.

"A full vessel is set upon time; we indeed see it, being now manifoldly; it (is) in front of all these beings; it call they time in the highest firmament" (53 : 3). What does the poet mean when he speaks of the full vessel or jar? It is the year with its sequence of days and nights, months and seasons, rather than the sun, this latter being identical with time itself. Tradition has understood the "vessel" in terms of *ahorātra-māsa-ṛtu-samvatsara-ādi*:

"He indeed together brought beings; he indeed together went about beings; being father, he became son of them; than him verily there is no other brilliancy than is higher" (53 : 4). Being the source of origin of everything *kāla-* is at the same time father and son! There is involved here the profound mythical category of thought which affirms *transendentia oppositorum*.<sup>31</sup> "Went about:" the verbal base used here, *pari-i-*,<sup>32</sup> can also be rendered "encompassed, surrounded."

"Time generated yonder sky, time also is these earths; what is and what is to be stands out sent forth by time" (53 : 5). The plural "earth" points to the three earths corresponding to the three skies; compare, "The three heavens, the three earths, and these six directions separately" (AV 4 : 20 : 2); the Rgveda as well as the Avesta are acquainted with the three-tier

---

*zur indogermanischen Wortkunde und Religionsgeschichte* [Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philol. hist. Klasse 98/5, Berlin, 1952] pp. 15-34). As the axle of Time's chariot *amṛta-* is the principle of life.

31. Cf. H. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1962).

32. This verb, to which Greek *peri-eimi*, corresponds seems to be used here with the purpose of suggesting the idea of the wheel of time.

conception of the earth.<sup>33</sup> What is still more significant is the poet's conviction that time as an object of his experience embraces the past and the future.

"In time is fervor, in time is what is chief, in time is the *brahman* collected; time is the lord of all, who was the father of Prajāpati" (53 : 8). Reference is made to "fervour," i.e., *tapas-*, whose creative, magico-mystical efficacy was recognized by Indo-European tradition at large.<sup>34</sup> The term *brahman-* should be understood as the magico-mystical word, thought of by the poet as the ultimate principle. To "lord" corresponds *īśvara-*, a common word in Indian tradition. Finally time is the father of Prajāpati, the creator. It would appear that the thought here goes back to an Aryan myth which visualized time as the source of origin of the creator-god himself (cf. II).

According to *kālasūkta-*, time is the ultimate principle. Reality, in spite of all multiplicity and plurality, is basically one, and this one thing is time. It is to be confessed that the author of AV 19 : 53 – 54 has not systematized his thought, but this is done in the Maitri Upaniṣad in the most admirable fashion (6 : 14–15); we shall now analyse its relevant sections.<sup>35</sup>

Chapter 6 : 1 begins with the statement that the supreme Self manifests itself as breath of life in the microcosm (= man) and as the sun in the macrocosm (= universe); it has two paths, an inner and an outer, which both return, through cyclic movement, to the starting point. What is affirmed here is, on the one hand, the absolute's selfdisclosure in terms of duality, and on the other, its essential oneness in spite of this duality. In the course of his subsequent disquisitions the sage goes on to elucidate his primordial intuition with the help of a series of comparisons and reflections, and his inference therefrom is that as long as knowledge remains on the level of duality, it implies multiplicity, but when it is non-dual, it transcends all such differentiations as cause and effect, etc. The knowledge of non-duality

33. Compare RV 1 : 108 : 9, 2 : 27 : 8, 3 : 56 : 2, and Ys. 11 : 7.

34. On this point, cf. Luke, *op. cit.* (n. 28) pp. 365f.

35. Latest translation (followed here) in R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures* (Everyman's Library, London, 1966) pp. 219–45.

is something that is beyond speech: it is incomparable and ineffable (cf. 6 : 7).

The sage now proceeds a step further and tries to clarify his inference concerning non-duality. He affirms that food is the highest form of the Self in so far as it is the source, origin and end of all things (6 : 11-12). He is not, however, satisfied with this inference, so that he finds it imperative to put forward another proposal: the origin of food is time and that of time the sun, inasmuch as it gives rise to the twelve months of the year and their subdivisions. There is the cyclic process whose author is the sun, and which in its turn is responsible for the production of food and the manifold subdivisions of time; through them all the sun moves, thus safeguarding the essential oneness of time (6 : 14).

The rest of the seer's reflections deserves to be cited in full: "Who reveres Brahman as time, from him time (= death) withdraws... For thus too did (Maitri) say:

"From time do creatures, flowing, issue,  
From Time they grow and prosper,  
In Time they reach their home (in death);  
Time is formless, (Time) has form" (6: 14).

From the one who worships the brahman as *kāla*-, *kāla*, i. e., time visualized as the destroyer of everything, will keep away. The sense here is that the person who knows time as the absolute will not be affected by the eventuality of death, for he is one with the absolute. Of course, time as the absolute is "formless," but as the object of empirical experience it has "form."

Brahman appears in two forms, namely, as time and as the timeless. Here we are again at the point raised in the opening statement of chapter 6, and as the sage feels that what he has said may be misunderstood or misconstrued, he goes on to add the remark that the year - the most conspicuous division of time - is itself Prajāpti, and, in the final analysis, brahman/ātman. He now formulates his conclusion in a quite impressive way:

“All beings Time digests  
 In the Great Self.  
 In whom or what is Time digested?  
 Who knows this, knows the Veda” (6: 15).

Time reduces everything to the highest Self, but to what will Time itself be reduced? The query here is rhetorical, the answer to which, the speaker feels, must be clear from all that has so far been said. The person who knows the profound meaning of Time is in possession of the highest knowledge. In conclusion, the upanisadic thinkers had, in their quest after the supreme principle which is one and universal, transcending multiplicity and duality, arrived at the inference that time was itself the absolute they had been looking for.

## II

Let us now cast a cursory glance at the traditions of ancient Iran. The term *zrvan-* has been classified by specialist as *jungavestisch*, i. e., belonging to a dialect posterior to the one used by the prophet Zarathushtra<sup>36</sup> in the *Gāthās* or the poems composed by himself.<sup>37</sup> Further more *zrvan-* is not a common word, nor is its etymology clear, so much so that professional Iranists have at times expressed their inability to interpret it.<sup>38</sup> Other specialists are, however, inclined to think that it is derived

36. Or, Zoroaster, according to the form popularized by the Greeks.

37. Original text in transcription, paraphrase and translation with exhaustive commentary in H. Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra I-II* (Indogermanische Bibliothek. I: Lehr- und Handbücher, Heidelberg, 1959); German translation in H. Lommel, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* (Sammlung Klosterberg, N. F., Basel, 1971). Cf. too J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Hymns of Zarathustra* (Beacon Press Paperbacks, Boston, 1963). M. W. Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas of Zarathustra* (Language Dissertations 4 Philadelphia, 1929, repr. 1966).

38. Cf., for example, C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (repr. Berlin, 1961) col. 1704. H. Reichelt, *Awestisches Elementarbuch* (Indogermanische Bibliothek. I, 1/5, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, 1967) p. 505.

from the base *g'er-*,<sup>39</sup> "to become mature, ripe, old," which survives in Sanskrit *jarati*, *jarant-* (from IE *g'eront-*), Ossetan *zärond-*,<sup>40</sup> Greek *geron*, etc. The genesis of *zrvan-* is as follows: from the base *g'er-w-* is created the theme *g'r-eu-* which, when enlarged by the addition of the suffix *-en-*, will yield *g'r-w-en-*, and this form will appear in Iniranian as *zrvan-*.<sup>41</sup>

The Avesta itself attests to the use of *zaurvan* (mas.) "old age, debilities of old age," *zaurura-*, "old, decrepit," *zareta*, id., *azaresant-*, "not becoming old," etc. As a matter of curiosity we may note here that the name Zarathushtra has been interpreted as a combination of *zarant-*, the participial form in Avestan corresponding to Sanskrit *jarant-*, "old," and *ustra-* (= Sanskrit *uṣṭra-*), "camel;" the sense of the name accordingly would be "he whose camels are old" (i. e., experienced)!<sup>42</sup>

From the semantic point of view there is no problem at all in the development of *zrvan-*, "time," from a root conveying the idea of age, for age itself can be identified with time. As a parallel to the semantic evolution involved here, there is the case of Greek *aion* which originally meant "life, span of life," etc., but later acquired the nuances "long period of time, age, a definite period of time," etc.<sup>43</sup>

39. Cf. Pokorny, *op. cit.*, pp. 390f. E. Benveniste *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* II (Paris, 1969) p. 49.

40. This is an Iranian language spoken in the Caucasus by the descendants of settlers who migrated there; cf. Benveniste, *Ocherki no osetinskому языку* (Moscow, 1965; Russian translation of *Etudes sur la langue ossète* [Paris, 1960]) p. 144.

41. Cf. Benveniste, *Origines de la formation des noms en indo-européen* (4th impr., Paris, 1973) p. 179.

42. For this view, cf. Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, col. 1676; Reichelt, *op. cit.*, p. 503. The name seems to mean "he who drives (can manage) camels" (cf. H. W. Bailey, *Transactions of the Philological Society* [1953] pp. 40f.)

43. There are scholars who argue that the Greek idea of *aiōn* has been borrowed from ancient Iran. This thesis is defended by H. F. J. Junker, *Über den iranischen Ursprung der hellenistischen Aionsvorstellung* (Heidelberg, 1922).

In the Avesta *zrvan-* has a relatively rich variety of meanings.<sup>44</sup> First of all it denotes "point of time, settled (fixed) time, appointed time;" e.g., "And now they grow up... in the time appointed for them" (Yt. 13:56); "... when worked at the right time, it shines to the eye" (Yt. 5:129); "If men would worship me with sacrifice..., then I would come to the faithful at the appointed time" (Yt. 8:11), i.e., at the right time of the year when rain is expected. Further, in the language of law *zrvan-* means "appropriate time for legal action." A third sense is "segment of time;" compare, "They meet together... (and) fight together... till the time of noon" (Yt. 8:28; cf. 9:11). The next shade of meaning is "period of time, length of time, duration"; cf. the clause, "... (the waters) ... had stood for a long time in the same place without flowing" (Yt. 13:53); "... for a long time be thou (O fire) for the furtherance of the heroic (renovation)..., yea, even till the good heroic (millennial) time when the renovation shall become complete" (Ys. 62:3). Finally there are texts in which *zrvan-* appears as a godhead. This is a point that must be studied in some detail.

The Avesta makes a distinction between *zrvan akarana*<sup>45</sup> "boundless time," and *zrvan darəgho-xvadhata*,<sup>46</sup> "the Sovereign Time of a Long Period," this latter being a species emanating from unlimited time and supposed to cover 12,000 years and then return to its matrix.<sup>47</sup> The following text mentions the two

44. Cf. Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, cols. 1703f.

45. The second word in this phrase is a compound consisting of the privative particle *a-* and the nominal elements *karana-*, "end, limit, boundary." The sense therefore is "endless, limitless, boundless," and the term is used with reference to both time and space.

46. In the last phrase *dar ghō* corresponds to Sanskrit *dirgha-*; and *xvadhāta* is to be analysed as *xva-* (= Sanskrit *sva-*) and *dhāta-*, the latter being a passive participle of *dhā-*, "to put, place, create" (cf. its cognates in Greek *ti-thē-mi*, in Latin *fō-ci*, etc.); the sense is "one who follows his own law, imperishable, eternal."

47. For a full exposition of the subject one should consult the major works on the Avestan religion. The following deserve to be specially noted.

species of time in the same breath: "We worship the Boundless Time and the Sovereign Time of a Long Period" (Ohr. Yt. 33). At times Boundless Time is invoked along with "the Sovereign Heaven and Vayu<sup>48</sup> whose action is most high" (Vid. 19:13. 16). In a Zoroastrian litany the two kinds of time are invoked side by side with the gods Wind and Sky:

"We sacrifice to the Sovereign Sky<sup>49</sup>  
We sacrifice to Boundless Time  
We sacrifice to the Sovereign Time of Long Period

We sacrifice to the beneficent, well-doing Wind" (Ny. 1:8). What we have here is a veritable deification of *zrvan-*, attested elsewhere too in the Avesta, and from the mention of the way that is *zrvodhata-*, "created by time" (Vid. 19: 29), it follows that time was even regarded as the creator-god.

Two more texts which are remnants of a mythology of time may be cited here. Zarathushtra tells the evil spirit: "To me Spenta Mainyu<sup>50</sup> gave it, he gave it to me in Boundless Time" (Vid. 19: 9); the writer is expressing his belief that the prayer Ahuna Vairya<sup>51</sup> was revealed to the pre-existent Zarathushtra before the creation of the world, and consequently in Boundless

48. That is, the Indian god Vāyu (who at times appears too as a demon).

49. The expression "we sacrifice" corresponds to Avestan *yazamaide* (= Sanskrit *yajāmahe*), from the root *yaz-* (= Sanskrit *yāj-*).

50. In the original *sponta mainyu-*, "holy spirit;" here *manyu-* (= Sanskrit *manyu-*) is the agent who exercises the activity denoted by the Indo-Iranian root *man-* (= IE *men-*, surviving in Greek *men-os*, Latin *mens*, etc.), and the translation "spirit" is an interpretation rather than anything else. As for the first word, it corresponds to Slavic *svat-* and Lithuanian *sventas*, "holy" (sused of the saints), and is an adjective formation from *span-*, "to be active" (cf. Nyberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 93f.; cf. too Bailey, "Iranian Studies, III," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 7 [1934] pp. 275-98).

51. This is one of the most sacred prayers of the Zoroastrians; its translation is a moot problem (cf. W. Hinz, "Zum Ahuna-Vairya-Gebet," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 4 (1960) pp. 154-59).

Time. Once when the fiend, after making an attempt, though in vain, to put the prophet to death, tempted him, Zarathushtra prayed to Ahura Māzdah who on his part exhorted him, "Invoke... the Boundless Time"; in obedience to this command he said: "I invoke... the Boundless Time" (Vid. 19:13, 16).

Non-Iranian sources<sup>52</sup> inform us that in Sasanian Persia there were sectarians who visualized Zurvān, i.e., Time personified and deified, as the ultimate principle of everything, including Ohrmazd and Ahriman.<sup>53</sup> Zurvanism (Zervanism), or the Zurvanite (Zervanite) heresy, as it is at times called, is one of the hotly discussed problems of Iranistics, and since the average reader may not be quite familiar with this particular development in the religious history of Iran, a brief discussion of it is perhaps not out of place here.

Some authorities have thought that the term *zrvan* occurs in the cuneiform tablets from Nuzi as a proper name under the form *Za-ar-wa-an*; it is said to survive also in compounds such

52. All the relevant texts are available in translation in Zaehner's massive monograph *Zurvanism, A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1958). The first part deals with the religious situation of the Sasanian era (pp. 7-53) and with the Zurvanite pandemonium (pp. 54-264; synthesis, pp. 265-72); the second part (pp. 275-431) offers a critical translation of the numerous sources dealing with Zurvanism. For a criticism of Zaehner's positions, cf. U. Bianchi, *Zamān Ohrmazd. Lo zoroastrismo nelle sue origini e nella sua essenza* (Storia e scienza delle religioni, Turin, 1958). The works cited in n. 47 too deal with the problem under consideration. As a curiosity it may be pointed out that H. H. Schaeder, "Der iranische Zeitgott und sein Mythos," *Zeitschrift den deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 95 (1911) pp. 268-98 (cf. pp. 290ff.), has argued that the myth of Zurvān is a malicious concoction by Christian fanatics. This contention is certainly absurd since the Iranian myth has its parallels in Indian tradition where the working of Christian fanaticism is out of question.

53. These monstrous names are the Pahlavi (Middle Persian) forms of Avestan Ahura Mazdāh and Añgra Mainyu ("the evil spirit").

as *It-hi-za-ar-wa*, *Ar-za-ar-wa*, and *Du-uk-ki-za-ar-wa*,<sup>54</sup> and if this contention is true, it follows that in the 14th century B. C. the god Zurvān was worshipped in what is now Northern Iraq! The proposal, however, is not at all true, for E. A. Speiser, the great authority on the Hurrian language, has pointed out that the word in question, to be read *Zarwa(n)*, is the name of a Hurrian goddess, a name which originally was a *nomen loci*.<sup>55</sup> It is therefore impossible to argue that *zrvan-* was in use as a technical term (or rather, as a proper, personal name) centuries before the emergence of Iran as a nation with its own specifically Aryan traditions.

In this connection, it is worth while referring to an interesting bit of information furnished by Greek documents. The Neo-Platonician Damascius (beginning of the 6th century A. D.) has preserved a statement made by Eudemius of Rhodes, one of the greatest disciples of Aristotle, which may thus be summarized: Some Iranians held that time was the immediate source of origin of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, while others regarded space as the primordial principle; it was held too that darkness and light were the first two principles to derive their origin from time / space,

54. Cf. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran* (Uppsala, 1938) p. 310; id., "Stand and Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte," *Numen* 2 (1955) p. 81. A certain bronze plaque from Luristan, preserved in the museum of Cincinnati, has been understood as a representation of Zurvān: a god, who is winged and androgynous, is engaged in giving birth to twins (cf. Duchesne-Guillemin, *op. cit.* [n. 47], pp. 22, 146). This theory is anything but certain as the exact date of the bronze is itself a moot question, and one of the prominent Iranists of the day goes to the extent of saying that "the majority of the 'Luristan bronzes' could well have been made in our own century" (R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* [Mentor Books, New York, 1966] p. 87). Nuzi, by the way was a settlement of the Hurrians, or the Horites, as they are called in the Bible (16th-14th cent. B. C.), in the region of Kirkuk, the oil-rich area in Northern Iraq, and notorious, until recently, as the scene of the Kurdish rebellion.

55. Cf. E. A. Speiser-R. H. Pfeiffer, *One Hundred Selected Nuzi Texts* (Annual of the American School of Oriental Research 16, New Haven, Conn. 1938) p. 9 (nn. 47, 48).

and they in their turn engendered Ohrmazd Ahriman. If this piece of information is accurate, speculations on the nature of time were in full swing in the fourth century B. C., and the absence of reference to them in the Gāthās and the earlier sections of the Avesta can then be the result of a systematic endeavour on the part of the men responsible for their codification to ignore them altogether. It should also be recalled here that there is the possibility that Zirathushtra, who had deliberately left out of consideration the Aryan god Mithra (Sanskrit Mitra),<sup>56</sup> purposely abstained from ever referring to the theories about time current among his contemporaries. And it is quite likely that in the rear of the series of queries in Ys. 41:3-5 religious polemic is at work.<sup>57</sup> We add here the relevant passages.

"This I ask thee, O Lord,<sup>58</sup> answer me truly:  
 Who was the first father of Righteousness at birth?<sup>59</sup>  
 Who appointed their path to sun and stars?  
 Who but thou is it through whom the moon waxes and  
 wanes? ...

56. After the prophet's death this traditional god was reinstated, and the Avesta embodies a long hymn in his honour; on the hymn, cf. I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (University of Cambridge Oriental Series No. 41, Cambridge, 1959).

57. Cf. Duchesne-Guillemin, *op. cit.* [n. 37] pp. 63-73. Of the twenty stanzas of this Gāthā nineteen begin with the formula "This I ask thee, answer me truly." The prophet is here following a traditional technique of IE poetry, which has also been preserved by the Old Norse compilation known as the Edda (cf. Schaeder, "Ein indogermanisches Liedtypus in den Gathas," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* [1940], repr. in R. Schmidt, *Indogermanische Dichtersprache* [Wege der Forschung 165, Darmstadt, 1968] pp. 61-71).

58. That is, Ahura (= Sanskrit *asura*-).

59. The term Righteousness corresponds to Avestan *asha-*, on its meaning and etymology, cf. Luke, *Jeevadhara* 26 (1975) p. 153, n. 19.

Who set the earth in its place below, and the sky...?  
 Who the waters and the plants?...  
 What artificer made light and darkness?  
 What artificer sleep and waking?  
 Who made the morning, noon and night...?"

These questions, addressed to Ahura Mazdāh, the personal God who had called him to be his prophet, seem to point to the views of men whom the prophet regarded as heretics, teachers of error and untruth.

Zurvanite beliefs are clearly recognizable in the Pahlavi books of the Zoroastrians,<sup>60</sup> and the Swedish Iranist Henrik Samuel Nyberg has been able to detect in the compilation known as *Bundahishn*<sup>61</sup> a hymn where Zurvān is praised as the primordial, supreme principle of everything.<sup>62</sup> The Zurvanite myth can be summarized as follows: In the beginning there was nothing at all, and neither heaven nor the earth was in existence, but

60. On Pahlavi literature, cf. M. Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," *Iranistik. Linguistik* (Handbuch der Orientalistik. I. Abt., 4. Bd., 2. Abschn., Lief. 1, Leiden, 1968) pp. 31-66 (cf. too pp. 67-76, where the same writer deals with "The Manichean Literature in Middle Iranian"). O. Klíma, "Die mittelpersische Buchliteratur," *Iranische Literaturgeschichte* Iranische Texte und Hilfsbücher 4 Leipzig, 1959) pp. 33-44. J. C. Tavadia, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier* (Iranische Texte... 2, Leipzig, 1956).

61. This title, literally, "Original Creation," is derived from the opening words of the book. Two recensions of the work are known, a short one preserved by Indian manuscripts and a longer one surviving in Iranian manuscripts; English translation (outmoded) by E. W. West, *Pahlavi Texts* I (The Sacred Books of the East 5, Ind. repr., Delhi, 1970).

62. Cf. his "Ein Hymnus auf Zurvān in *Bundahisn*," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 82 (1928) pp. 217 ff.; cf. too "Questions de cosmogonie et cosmologie mazdeennes," *Journal Asiatique* 214 (1929) pp. 193-340; 219 (1931) pp. 1-134, 193-244; for the reconstructed poetical form of the hymn, cf. Benveniste, "Le texte du draxt a ūrīk et la versification pehlevie," *ibid.* 217 (1930) pp. 193-225 (cf. pp. 222 f.).

there existed Zurvān all by himself. For a thousand years he offered sacrifice so that he might have a son whose name would be Ohrmazd and who would create heaven and earth and all that would be in them. At the end of a thousand years he began to doubt whether his sacrifice would be of any avail, and he was thus pondering over the problem, Ohrmázd and Ahriman were conceived in the womb, i.e., in the female half of Zurvān himself who, it would seem, was visualized as a hermophrodite.

The numerous other details of the myth (e. g., Ahriman's ripping open the womb and appearing before Zurvān claiming to be Ohrmazd, etc.) and the relationship between Zurvanism and orthodox Zoroastrianism are not of any moment for us.<sup>63</sup> For our purpose it is sufficient to note that the god Zurvān was taken over by the Manichaeans who also called him the Father of Greatness and the ruler of the realm of light, and the Sogdians,<sup>64</sup> precisely because of the similarity between the Iranian supreme principle and their own Father of Light, called the latter Zrva. And lastly the Buddhist Sogdians used the same name as the equivalent of Brahmā, the first member of the sacred triad of Hinduism.

Our discussions can be brought to a close with a cursory glance at a detail in the Zurvanite myth which has a quite remarkable parallel in Indian mythology. As Zurvān, because of his desire to have progeny, offered sacrifice, so Prajāpati, according to Indian mythology, performed sacrifices and was troubled

63. The movement flourished in the Sasanian era (226-651 A. D.), when the rulers of Persia had generally been defenders of orthodoxy. For the political background, cf. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les sassanides* (2nd ed., Copenhagen, 1944, repr., 1970). The professional biblical scholar may find it interesting to learn that Zurvanite influence upon the Qumran community's doctrine of the two spirits has been postulated by H. Michaud, "Un mythe zervanite dans un des manuscrits de Qumran," *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955) pp. 137-47.

64. These were the Iranian tribes who were settled in the province of Sugud or Sogdiana, i. e., the area of Transoxiana, the land between the rivers Oxus and Jaxartar; on their literature, cf. O. Hansen, *Iranistik*, pp. 77-99.

by a scruple. He "practised burning austerities... He wiped his forehead and it was ghee. He held it forth to the fire and was seized by a scruple: 'Should I offer it? Should I not?' ...<sup>65</sup> The common feature in the two myths is the belief that everything, including the gods, originated from a sacrifice offered by a primordial being, and the survival of this persuasion both in India and Iran goes to show that thinkers in the two countries were for long grappling with the problem of origin. The conclusion some of them arrived at was that time was the ultimate principle that gave rise to everything visible and invisible.

.....

Helmut von Glasenapp has pointed out that the thought regarding time in the fourth Veda "in Indien selber nie zu einer systematischen Ausbildung gelangt ist, wie etwa in Iran," It is only among astrologers that one comes across great interest in time, and it is unfortunately they who have continued the tradition of the authors of AV 19: 53-54!<sup>66</sup> As for ancient Iran, Zurvanism was a heresy that obviously marked a departure from the religion preached by Zarathushtra, and it never had any significant impact on the life of the people of Iran. In Judaism and Christianity time is something inseparable from the history of salvation: the personal God who has disclosed himself through biblical history is the author and master of the process of time, a process that he will himself lead and guide to the goal he himself fixed long ago. For the Judaeo-Christian believer time means the moment of decision when, exercising his freedom, he listens in faith to God and becomes a sharer in his gift of salvation. And the process of time will reach its final term at the

65. Cf. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism. Their Survival and Renewal* (Religious Perspectives 15, Harper Torchbook ed., New York, 1970) p. 46.

66. Cf. his *Die Literaturen Indiens von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Kröners Taschenausgabe Bd. 318, Stuttgart, 1961) p. 69.

moment of the eschatological consummation, when history will itself reach its ultimate goal. Such an idea of time is alien to the thought of the Indo-Iranians of antiquity.<sup>67</sup>

Calvary, Trichur-680004

K. Luke

---

67. True, Zarathushtra had a definite eschatology (for details, cf. the works cited in n. 47), but it never succeeded in penetrating to the masses. Specialists at times speak of an IE eschatology (cf. A. V. Ström, "Das indogermanische Erbe in den Urzeit- und Endzeitschilderungen des Edda-Liedes *Völuspā*, "Akten des X. internationalen Kongresses für die Geschichte der Religionen [Marburg, 1961] pp. 83f. S. Wikander, "Germanische und indo-iranische Eschatologie," *Kairos. Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 2 [1960] pp. 83-88). As they do so they are thinking of the complex of ideas about the end of everything in the *Völuspā*, one of most famous poems of the *Edda*, i. e., the collection of poems embodying Germanic mythology and the legends about the heroes of antiquity, written in Old Norse (Icelandic). The *Völuspā* recounts the *ragna rök*, "the fatal destiny (end) of the gods." All the gods fall down dead, mankind is wiped out, stars fall from the sky, the earth becomes a burning furnace, and is finally swallowed up by the sea. After this there is born a new earth, and new gods appear on the scene; Baldr, the fairest of the old generation of gods, rises to new life (for details, cf. J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* II [Grundriss der germanischen Philologie 12/2, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1970] pp. 392-405). In the *Völuspā* time appears as a cyclic process, and it is quite possible that the poem may embody genuine IE elements, but on the whole it exhibits traces of Judaeo-Christian ideas, and scholars are now agreed that the poet, who was a non-Christian living around 1000 A. D., borrowed heavily from Christian sources. Our conclusion therefore remains valid.

## Book Reviews

Georgio Buccellati (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of the Ancient Near East. A Volume of Studies Offered to Ignace Jay Gelb on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday October 14, 1972* (= *Orientalia*, Vol. 42, 1973 – fasc. 1-2. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973). pp. 337, with frontispiece and one plate.

The name Ignace Jay Gelb may not be known to all the readers of *Jeevadhara*. This is quite understandable when one remembers that he is a specialist in Assyriology, and also that his numerous publications are not written for novices in biblical science. Professor Gelb belongs to the prestigious Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He is also on the editorial board of the monumental *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956ff.) which is now in the course of publication. He has contributed to the decipherment of Hieroglyphic Hittite and has widened our knowledge of Old Accadian, Amorite, and so on. He is a philologist by profession, but in his writings philology becomes a key to the understanding of the *Kultur- and Geistesgeschichte* of ancient Western Asia.

The volume under review begins with the Jubilarian's bibliography (pp. 1-8) and is immediately followed by a study concerned with the problem of method in the investigation of the Ancient Near East. Incidentally, the expression Near East is to be understood from the point of view of the Western scholar, for whom the whole of the Fertile Crescent, i. e., the area comprising all the regions that will be covered by a crescent-shaped line beginning in Egypt and ending in the Persian Gulf, remains the Near East. The main bulk of the volume is divided into four parts.

Part One deals with writing and palaeography and includes three contributions treating of the cuneiform script. Prof. Gelb, it may be recalled here, has published one of the basic books on script, entitled *A Study of Writing: The Foundations of Grammatology* (2nd ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,

1963); this book has been translated in to German, Italian, French, Spanish and Japanese.

Part Two deals with linguistics and literature. The study of languages from the point of view of their inner structure is a characteristic feature of the modern approach. Statistical methods and the computer programme too have contributed to the investigation of languages. The bearing of all these on the study of the ancient Near Eastern languages is discussed by a group of specialists in the second part. The study, "Verbal Aspects in Semitic," pp. 114-20. by Jerzy (= George) Kurylowicz, the great Polish Indo-Europeanist (!), is of the utmost interest to the Hebraist. S. Gevirtz, "On Canaanite Rhetoric: The Evidence of the Amarna Letters from Tyre," pp. 162-77; too is of great moment for a proper understanding of OT rhetoric and stylistics.

Part Three is concerned with archaeology, history and religion. The studies in this section are highly specialized and discuss abstruse problems. M. B. Rowton, "Autonomy and Nomadism in Western Asia," pp. 247-58, sheds a flood of light on the history of the patriarchs and the theological theme of wanderings. R. Berger-R. Protsch, "The Domestication of Plants and Animals in Europe and the Near East," pp. 214-27, is also of interest to the interpreter of the OT.

Part Four is philological in nature. H. H. Paper, "Ecclesiastes in Judaeo-Persian," pp. 328-37, gives the text in unvocalized Hebrew characters, of the Persian translation of the book of Qoheleth, dating from the Middle Ages. The manuscript contains the vocalized Tiberian text followed by the Persian rendering. To give the reader some idea of the text here is the opening verse: *sxwn'n qhlt pwsr dwd p'ds'h dr yrwslm*. The first word, to be read *saxwanān*, is the plural of *saxwan*, "word, speech" (N. B. *x* = *kh*). *pwsr* = *pusar*, is the *casus obliquus* of *pus*, "son", which goes back to Iranian *puthra-* (= Sanskrit *putra-*). *p'ds'h* = *padesāh*, means "sovereign" (cf. *Pasha*). The word is of Turkish origin. *dr* = *dar*, lit. means "door, gate," but it is also used of the royal court (compare the expression *porte*, used of the Turkish court). The word is etymologically related to Sanskrit *dvāra-* (Avestan *dvar-*), English *door*, and so forth.

The book under review, as is obvious, is not addressed to simple students of theology, but professors in our Seminaries who have to deal with the OT will find in it a wealth of information that is not available even in the best commentaries on the OT. The reviewer, who had the rare privilege of being the Jubilarian's student, wish as him good health and long life, so that he may contribute, as he has been doing for more than 40 years (Prof. Gelb's earliest article dates back to 1928), to our understanding of the *Kultur-* and *Geistesgeschichte* of the ancient Orient.

K. Luke

.....

Jerzy Kurylowicz, **Studies in Semitic Grammar and Metrics** (Polska Akademia Nauk. Komitet Językoznawstwa. Prace Językoznawcze 67 = Polish Academy of Science. Committee of Linguistics. Section Linguistics 67, Karków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, 1972). pp. 207.

The name Jerzy (= George) Kurylowicz pronounced Kur-wowich) does not figure in the works of professional exegetes. The person concerned is not an exegete and it may even be doubted whether he will ever be able to expose a biblical text, but he remains one of the great authorities on Semitic grammar. His field of specialization is Indo-European philology, where he has made original contributions. He is quite at home in Semitics as well. His competence in structural (synchronic) and historical (diachronic) linguistics makes his discussion of grammatical problems profound, penetrating and fascinating.

The book under review, published by the Polish Academy of Sciences forms vol. 67 of the Section Linguistics, and comes to a close with a summary in Polish (pp. 189-205). The work consists of ten chapters, the last being a discussion on metre in Arabic, Hebrew and Accadian. Chp. I (pp. 6-31) deals with the nature of the Semitic root and Chp. II (pp. 32-52) with vowel gradation (also known as ablaut and apophony) in the Semitic languages. In Greek, for example, we come across the alternation between *e* (the basic Indo-European vowel) and *o*: *leg-ō* : *log-os*, *leip-ō* : *le-loip-a*, *pher-ō* : *phor-eō*, etc.; cf. too Latin *teg-ō* : *tog-a*. The type of alternation in question here can be quantitative or qua-

litative. It plays a paramount rôle in the morphology of the Indo-European languages. Kurylowicz examines at length the part apophony plays in Semitic grammar; in this brief review it is impossible to give an idea of the insights contained in Chp. II.

Chps. III, IV and V discuss the question of verbs, and the author brings out very well the contrast between Indo-European and Semitic verbal systems. Nouns and adjectives are studied in Chps. VI-IX, and Chp. X passes on to consider the problem of metre in three of the the principal Semitic languages. Here is what Kurylowicz has to say on the nature of Hebrew metre which may come as surprise to many a reader: "The metre of the poetical parts of the O. Testament is of quite a different nature. Being based on word-accent it is nearer colloquial language than the quantitative metre of Arabic. Hebrew versification may be compared, *mutatis mutandis*, to that of O. Germanic" (p. 166.).

Those who are interested in Semitics will find the book under review most fascinating. Reading the work is, of course, anything but easy, but if anyone, after overcoming the initial difficulties, perseveres to the end, he shall find himself amply rewarded.

K. Luke

.....

**Helmut Lamparter, Die Apokryphen I-II (Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments. Erläuterungen alttestamentlicher Schriften 25/I-II, Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1972) Pp. 218, 226.**

The Deuterocanonical books of the OT are known among Protestants as the Apocrypha of the OT. Every Catholic is familiar with the lovely story of Tobias, and the books of Sirach and Wisdom have been heavily drawn upon in the liturgy, but unfortunately commentaries upon these books are quite rare. Of course, there are the commentaries in the massive volumes edited by E. Kautzsch and R. H. Charles, but they are not suitable for the class-room nor is sufficient justice done in these works to the theological side. In the easily accessible one-volume commentaries the Deuterocanonicals too are exposed, but because of the limitations of space the exposition remains too brief.

Lamparter is a Lutheran exegete and his two-volume work belongs to a collection of commentaries on the OT which are popular in nature and endeavour to highlight the message of the OT. Vol. I. deals with the book of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus) and Vol. II with wisdom, Tobias, Judith and Baruch. This volume also includes the Song of the three youths in the burning furnace (Dan 3: 22-66.) We miss of course, the books of the Maccabees. The author has adopted the Greek text of Sirach as the basis of his translation, which is itself accompanied by copious textual notes. The commentary in every instance is eminently theological, and includes at times pertinent remarks. There are also citations from Luther and Calvin, which will certainly enable the Catholic reader to become acquainted with these great men who effected, in the Church, a reform that was long overdue.

In this short review it is not possible to give an idea of the richness of Lamparter's commentary. As an example here is what he has to say regarding the religious significance of Judith. Luther had made the following observation about this book: "It is therefore a fine, good, holy and useful book, to be read by us Christians. One should understand its words, as though a spiritual, holy poet or prophet were speaking." Lamparter writes: "The author is neither poet or prophet, but rather a sage of the (period of the) Maccabean wars of independence, who put his literary talents at the service of strengthening the faith of his contemporaries, convinced that no power of the foe was too great, no situation too hopeless, since almighty God could grant help and victory through a single individual, even though it were a woman not born to fight. He had before his eyes this purpose, in the striking story of Judith and Holophernes, and does not take his stand on a perverted and purely external morality" (as O. Zöckler does in his *Die Apokryphen des AT*, p. 186). At a time when the people of Israel have again to defend themselves against the might of foes their right to have a home in the land of their forefathers and their claim to political existence with the power of weapons and courage, one will be able to read with different eyes a writing such as the book of Judith" (vol. II, pp. 139f.). The volumes of Lamparter are a 'must' for every professor of biblical science in our seminaries.

K. Luke

## COMMUNICATION FROM READERS

Sir,

I appeal against the line on p. 199 of Jeevadhara, March 1976. It is about the 10th from the top, written by Dr. George Soares-Prabhu. The line reads: "...the characteristic male chauvinistic attitude of the patriarchal society...." The celibate scripture scholar will, when referring to Ephesians 5, naturally lump St. Paul with male chauvinists! It is so clear, in Ephesians 5, that the Apostle is not speaking because he is influenced by his times and his environments. That may obtain in 1 Cor. 11: 3, but certainly not in Eph. 5.

I am not a scripture scholar: but I am a logician and psychologist. When Paul tells the Ephesians that wives must be subject to their husbands, he is not lisping his own religious opinions. He is proclaiming God's word, for the simple reason that he makes a clear-cut distinction between his advice to wives and to husbands. Equally clear-cut and conclusive is his supporting argument: the parallel between Christ and his bride, the Church.

Sir, I don't think that a married scripture authority would have dared to write such a line as that on p. 199!

I request you to get this point rectified in some future issue of Jeevadhara. Thanking you, etc.

A. Machado  
S. S. Prep. Millitary School  
Pune-411005

# under the auspices of the CBCI Clergy Commission

The following articles are sponsored by and written for the CBCI Clergy Commission by Fr. J. Neuner, s. j.

(General Editor)

## MEDITATIONS ON PRIESTHOOD - I

“Behold I come”

\* When Christ came into the world, he said: Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body thou hast prepared for me; In burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said: Behold, I come to do thy will, O God”

(Hebr 10, 5-7).

Jesus is priest. He has filled this word with a new meaning, with its true meaning.

At all times priesthood meant closeness to God, not only for the priest himself but for others as well, mediating, bringing God into the earthly life of man, his truth and his law, his guidance and assuring presence, and opening this closed world of ours towards God in faith and trust, in praise and gift.

So it was also in Israel. Priests in the Old Testament reached out to God in many ways, through the consuming flames of burning victims on the alter, in solemn ritual when the blood of animals was sprinkled over the people as a sign of expiation, in festive liturgies when they stood before the people leading them on the distant road to God, whom no one had ever seen. Priests also brought God close to people, teaching about his all compassing power when he created heaven and earth (Gen 1), how he made a covenant with all nations (Gen 9) and gave a law that regulated the life of his own people.

The rituals had been filled with the awe of ancient times, the majesty and fear of Sinai, the promises and threats... But even the most solemn of gestures wear out, repetitions turn into routine, the singing of the heart dies in the murmured chanting of psalms, and the word of God is buried in human wisdom. This is not what God wanted: "Sacrifices and offerings thou didst not desire".

Jesus is priest - is he? During his earthly life they gave him many titles: teacher, rabbi, prophet, messiah; no one would have called him priest. He had no part in the ritual of the temple, was not a member of a priestly family, never learned to speak the solemn language of the liturgy.

Yet in him the real priesthood begins, the shadows pass away. "A body thou hast prepared for me". Body is more than flesh and exterior appearance, it is man's earthly existence, the whole person, as he lives and acts, works and suffers. It is our existence in a human life and struggle. Jesus accepts our existence as God's gift to him, and as his task. "He had to be made like his brethren in every respect" (Hebr 2. 17) His mediating priesthood consists in his very being. Jesus lives his priesthood and unfolds it in his life: "Behold, I come".

It begins in years of silence; it opens out in his public ministry in the cities of Galilee where he proclaims his father's kingdom, in days of triumph when the people press on him, and in the hour of darkness in Jerusalem; it is fulfilled in his glory when he is raised to the right hand of God. No rituals, no solemn festivals, only to live, to serve, to give his life, to be received by his father. This is Jesus' priesthood.

It is the only real priesthood. All other forms of the priesthood receive meaning from him: that of the old covenant was a shadow of the truth (cf. Hebr 8. 5). In the New Testament Jesus unites all his believers "into a kingdom of priests to God" (Rev. 1. 6), to continue and embody his saving mission and presence on earth; he extends the responsibility for this mission to the Apostles and those who hold office in the Church to proclaim the good news, to lead the faithful, and to renew the mystery of his death and resurrection in their midst. But the

common priesthood of the faithful and that of bishops and priests have their power and meaning only from him; they are a participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Thus both, the common and the ministerial priesthood, share in the characteristics of Christ's priesthood. No longer can priesthood be considered merely a task which is carried out during office hours, or a role to be played in the community. It is a form of life, total, allpervading, sharing in Jesus' work and life, death, glory and mission.

My life is no longer mine: behold, I come, every morning accepting the burdens and joys of my life, the routine and the surprises of the day. As priest I come not only for myself, but with the many to whom I belong and for whom I am priest; they become part of me. Not that I could open their life to God and could give them light, but Christ in me, his presence reaching out to them. To be with God and to be with the people in Jesus Christ, this is priesthood in the New Testament.

## MEDITATIONS ON PRIESTHOOD - 2

### "To give his life as a ransom"

"You know that those who are supposed to rule over the gentiles lord it over them, and their great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10, 42-45).

Among all nations priesthood has an ambiguous history. It did fulfill a spiritual mission in bringing God's law and blessing to men and in leading people to God. But it is only natural that the spiritual influence of priests gave rise also to a social

status, tended to set them apart as a special class, gave them dignity, bestowed privileges on them, offered economic advantages. It was so also with the priesthood of the Old Testament: the gospels reflect its decline at the time of Jesus when priestly functions were limited to the temple ritual, when teaching was discarded and the instruction of the people taken care of by a body of lay persons, the scribes, when interests and activities at least of the higher clergy were turned to the sphere of politics.

The New Testament priesthood has been exposed to the same temptation. Even during the first centuries, when the Church was still persecuted, the clergy held a position of prominence and leading positions in the Church were coveted with such eagerness that rivalries led to schisms. Once the Church enjoyed freedom and became the state religion of the Roman Empire, the position of bishops, priests and deacons enjoyed great social prestige. Disillusions were unavoidable: When business enterprises of the clergy were declared tax free because the income was supposed to be used for the benefit of the poor, the trade of the clergy soon extended to such a degree that in Justian's legislation the need was felt to forbid the clergy all trade - a measure that is still contained in Canon Law. During the Middle Ages the Church held a virtual monopoly of the cultural life. The higher clergy, pope and bishops, enjoyed great political and economic power. The frequent and grave misuse of this influence precipitated the Reformation, which expressed in social terms, was a revolt of the laity against the worldliness and the power position of ecclesiastics. In spite of the reformation of Trent the offices of priests and bishops often remained positions of dignity, influence and economic strength. We are still struggling for the appropriate image of the priest.

Is this a meditation? It is a background reflection, dark, perhaps depressing - a background against which Jesus' words flash up like the lightening that tears the black horizon, a lightening from heaven that shakes the earth and in one glance allows us to see Jesus' mission as the perpetual challenge to all who bear his name and continue his mission.

The context of Jesus' words consists in the ambitious request of James and John to sit at the right and left hand of

Jesus in the glory of his kingdom, and the indignation of the ten about their ambition. Jesus compares the disciples' attitude with the social behaviour of the people around them: "You know...". It is the daily experience that each one is guided by the conscious or unconscious desire to be on top, to exercise power and influence. The social status among men is measured by prestige, economic strength, political power. These are the accepted standards which dominate human relations.

Jesus raises the radical challenge: "It shall not be so among you." His understanding of human relations stands in sharpest contrast. His own mission is "not to be served but to serve", to live for others and to lay down his life for them. The same attitude is demanded of his disciples. Greatness in his kingdom means service, the first place belongs to him who considers himself slave, indebted to his neighbour, with no right and claims for himself. His words ring strange in his world, and in ours. The conflict lasts through the ages. One of the persistent themes of the Council was the spirit of service; the words of our meditations are among the most quoted bible texts in the documents. They are applied to bishops and priests, to seminarians and religious. They will not be implemented by means of new legislation but by personal acceptance.

At all times the Church found ways to rationalize her attitude: she needs money, power, social prestige to survive and to fulfill her mission in a competitive society. It is obvious that the Church must use modern means to convey her message- this is not the problem. Jesus speaks about personal attitudes, about self assertion and superiority within the circle of his disciples, about ambition and jealousy: "It shall not be so among you".

It is hard to accept his standards. Questions arise which concern us deeply: What about my career? And if I am meant to live for others, what about my personal needs, building up my life and personality, finding the inner assurance so vitally needed in my life and work? These, indeed, are serious questions. Jesus answers them in his own person: What about *his* career? *his* personality? *his* assurance? He lost all this, his life was wiped out and ended in ruin. But he lives, and he found his real life; his person still fascinates men. Laying down his life, he did find

it. Of his disciples he asks the same: Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it". (Mk 8.35).

These words of Jesus are addressed to the inner circle of his disciples. Though valid for all Christians they are spoken more directly to those whom he has chosen, who would hold positions of authority in his Church. They contain the secret of his own power, on which also the mission of his disciples depends.

Statement about Ownership and other Particulars  
about **Jeevadhara**

(Form IV — see Rule 8)

1. Place of Publication : Alleppey.
2. Periodicity of its Publication : Bi-monthly.
3. Printer's Name : Fr Joseph Mathew, C. M. I.  
Nationality : Indian  
Address : Manager, St Joseph's Press,  
Mannanam.
4. Publisher's Name : Fr Constantine Manalel, C. M. I.  
Nationality : Indian  
Address : Theology Centre  
Alleppey.
5. Editor's Name : Fr Constantine Manalel, C. M. I.  
Nationality : Indian  
Address : Theology Centre,  
Alleppey

Names and addresses of individuals who own the Newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital: Fr Constantine Manalel, C. M. I. Theology Centre, Alleppey.

I, Constantine Manalel, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd)  
Publisher

PERGAMENT about Oathship and other Parole papers  
Report **Leavesdays**

(Form 1A — see Rule 8)

1.	Place of Application	Alleppey
2.	Signature of the Applicant	Manalel Constantine
3.	Place of Birth	Alleppey
4.	Occupation	Teacher
5.	Residence	Alleppey
6.	Age	35
7.	Marital Status	Married
8.	Spouse	Fr. Theodore Manalel C. W. I.
9.	Children	Two
10.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
11.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
12.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
13.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
14.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
15.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
16.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
17.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
18.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
19.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
20.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
21.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
22.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
23.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
24.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.
25.	Relatives	Fr. Constantine Manalel C. W. I.

Printed at St. Joseph's Press, Mannanam  
and Published at Theology Centre, Alleppey  
by Constantine Manalel.

1. The Editorial board does not necessarily endorse the individual views of contributors.
2. Articles for publication should be sent to the respective section editors.
3. Books for reviews (two copies each), exchanges, and queries should be addressed to the general editor.
4. Subscriptions are payable in advance and must be sent to the manager.

#### **Subscription Rates :-**

Indian :      Rs      15/- (Malayalam)

                    Rs      18/- (English)

Foreign:      \$      6/- (U.S.A.) or its equivalent abroad

# Journal of

# DHARMA

An International Quarterly of World Religions

Published by

the Dharmaram College Centre for the Study of  
World Religions, Bangalore, India

in collaboration with :

1. Department of Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, India.
2. Department of Asian Studies and Non-Western Civilization, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, U. S. A.
3. Department of Religious Studies, University of Lancaster, England.
4. Sri Aurobindo Research Academy, Pondicherry, India.

*Subscription Rates:*

Annual: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka: Rs. 20/-

Other Countries:

Air mail: US \$. 11. 00 £: 5 or its equivalent.

Surface mail: US \$. 8. 00 & 4. 00 or its equivalent

Single Copy Rs. 6/-; US \$. 2. 00 or its equivalent.

*Foundation Subscription:*

India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka: Rs. 10.0/-

Other Countries: U. S. \$ 200/- or its equivalent.

**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF WORLD RELIGIONS**  
**DHARMARAM COLLEGE,**  
**BANGALORE - 560029**  
**INDIA**